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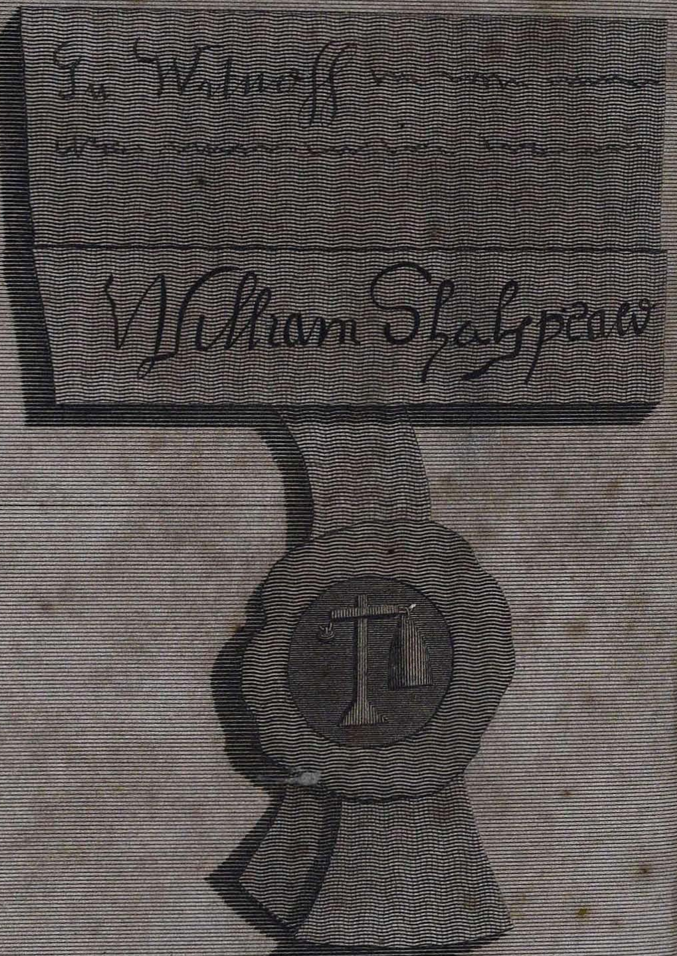

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125

THE CONFESSIONS OF WILLIAM-HENRY IRELAND.

CONTAINING

THE PARTICULARS OF HIS FABRICATION

OF THE

Shakspeare Manuscripts;

TOGETHER WITH

ANECDOTES AND OPINIONS

(Hitherto unpublished)

OF MANY DISTINGUISHED PERSONS

IN THE

Literary, Political, and Theatrical World.

"THE WHOLE TRUTH, AND NOTHING BUT THE TRUTH."

THE TANJORE MAHARAJA SERFOJI'S SARASWATI MAHAL

LONDON,

PRINTED BY ELLERTON AND BYWORTH, JOHNSON'S COURT, FLEET STREET,

FOR THOMAS GODDARD, CORNER OF PALL MALL AND THE HAYMARKET.

1805.

(Price, 7s. 6d. in Boards.)

THE TANJORE MAHARAJA SERFOGI'S SARASWATI MAHAL
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PREFACE.

IN the year 1796 I gave to the world a concise pamphlet, in which I avowed myself the fabricator of the manuscripts attributed by me to Shakspeare.

The papers themselves, and the circumstances attending their production, had so highly excited the public curiosity that the whole edition was disposed of in a few hours: and so great has since been the eagerness to procure a copy, that, though originally published at one shilling, a single impression has been sold, in a public auction-room, at the extravagant price of a guinea.

This fact was known to many of my friends, who in consequence have often expressed surprise that I did not republish the pamphlet, and have frequently importuned me to do so: but the revival of the subject, I conceived, might rather tend to injure than benefit me as a literary character: besides, I had already suffered much from the agitation of the question, and had reason to wish it might for ever rest in peace. The consideration, however, that I do but injure my own reputation by silently bearing a more than merited portion of obloquy has at length incited me to give a narrative of the facts in the order in which they occurred, and a simple relation of the motives as they arose and operated on my conduct, that the world may be enabled to judge between my contemners and me, and that

my character may be freed from the stigmas with which it has so undeservedly been sullied.

In the course of the ensuing pages will be found various anecdotes of the principal persons who rendered themselves conspicuous during the Shaksperian controversy. These I have frequently detailed in the circle of my friends, who have invariably stated the entertainment they have received, and the full conviction that the public would experience an equal portion of amusement were the whole to be collected and placed before them in a publication similar to the one which I have in the present instance adopted.

Many of the poetic effusions interspersed throughout the subsequent pages were written with the intention of being handed to Mr. S. Ireland as the composi-

tions of Shakspeare; but the avowal of the whole fabrication speedily following, they were never transcribed in the disguised hand: they have therefore remained ever since in their original state, and are now for the first time exposed to general view.

To his Royal Highness the PRINCE OF WALES I have ventured to dedicate an effusion, the genuine feelings of my soul; for I have ever beheld in that august personage a concentration of all the attributes which confer honour on the elevated station he was born to fill.

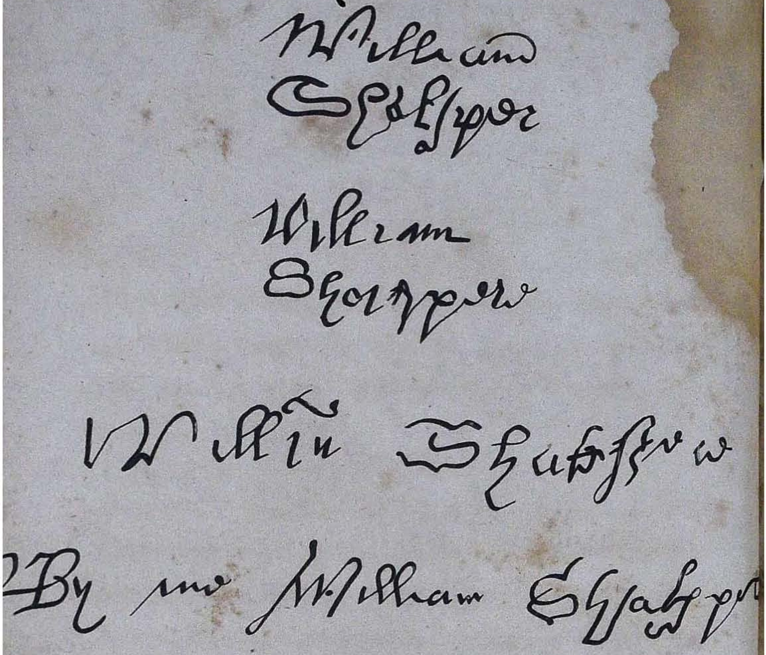
To George Chalmers, esq., I have addressed a letter, containing an apology for my literary imposition, and craving his pardon and that of the other respectable gentlemen who thought with him, whose forgiveness I am anxious to ob-

tain by the vindication of my own conduct.

In the anxious hope that nothing herein contained may tend to my detriment in the estimation of the public at large, I shall conclude these prefatory lines by referring my readers to the following pages for the proofs requisite to the full establishment of the positions stated at the end of the volume, and with a sanguine hope that my conduct will henceforth be regarded rather as that of an unthinking and impetuous boy than of a sordid and avaricious fabricator instigated by the mean desire of securing pecuniary emolument.

THE TANJORE MAHARAJA SERFOGI'S SARASWATI MAHAL.

… of Shakespeare.



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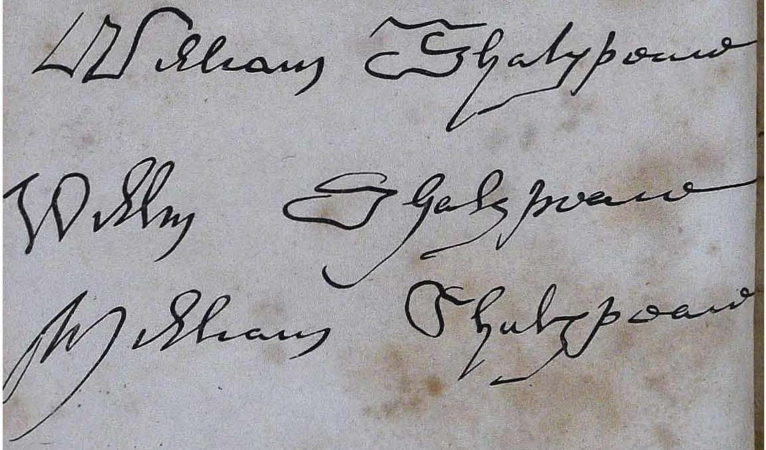

THE TANJORE MAHARAJA SERFOGI'S SARASWATI MAHAL *

CONFESSIONS

OF

WILLIAM-HENRY IRELAND.

INFANCY, AND MR. HARVEST'S ACADEMY.

As the period of my infancy can be productive of no satisfaction to the public, it will be sufficient for me to state that I was born in London, and that the first seminary to which I was sent was Mr. Harvest's, at the back of Kensington Square; to whose parental kindness I am indebted for the first rudiments of my native language, and the mechanical art of writing.

PRIVATE THEATRICALS.

At a very early period of life I certainly acquired a great fondness for theatrical pursuits, originating, I should conceive, in the friendship that subsisted between Mr. Samuel Ireland and the family of Mr. Linley (then one of the proprietors of Drury-lane theatre); by which means we had free egress at all times both behind and before the curtain of old Drury: and a circumstance which tended perhaps as much as any other to root this partiality was a private play which was performed at the then mansion of R. B. Sheridan, esq., in Bruton Street, at which was present a large party of the nobility. The piece selected on the occasion was the opera of The Gentle Shepherd, with Bon Ton; the parts being filled by young persons. My character, though of a trivial nature, did not diminish the zest I felt on that occasion; but, on the contrary, rendered my predilection for theatrical pursuits even more determined.

STUPIDITY WHEN A CHILD.

During my childhood I was ever fond of making pasteboard theatres, but very averse to every thing like study and application. When at Mr. Shury's academy, at Ealing, I was so very backward, that once, on going home for the vacation, I was made the bearer of a letter from Mr. Shury, wherein he acquainted my father, Mr. Samuel Ireland, that I was so stupid as to be a disgrace to his school, and that, as he found it impossible to give me the least instruction, he would much rather I should not return after the holidays, as he (Mr. Shury) conceived it was no better than robbing Mr. Ireland of his money.

SOHO SCHOOL.

I was for about twelve months at Dr. Barrow's academy in Soho Square; but my constitution being very weakly, and the town air but ill according with my then state of health, it was deemed expedient to send me to a country academy.

I have mentioned this seminary, as one curious circumstance occurred. The annual play performed by the scholars of Soho school, at the breaking up for the vacation, happened to be Shakspeare's tragedy of King Lear; and on my production of the spurious manuscripts, some years afterwards, the very drama fixed upon by myself, and which I wrote on old paper and in the disguised hand, with alterations, happened to be the tragedy of King Lear; not that I recurred in the least to the piece so performed at the Soho academy: and this circumstance is noticed merely to show the strange coincidence of events which will frequently occur at different stages of our lives.

RESIDENCE IN FRANCE.

The happiest period of my life was spent in France, where I continued for about four years. My first residence was at Amiens in Picardy; from whence I was removed to the college of Eu in Normandy; after which I visited Paris, &c.—

When Mr. Ireland (after so long an absence from my native country) visited the continent in order to conduct me to England, I felt pained on quitting France; and as if a presentiment had hung over me, I would fain have continued there for years.

On my arrival in England I could scarcely speak my native language; and for a length of time my conversation was so loaded with Gallicisms as frequently to render my meaning incomprehensible.

ARTICLES ENTERED INTO WITH MR. WILLIAM BINGLEY, OF NEW INN.

A certain period having elapsed after my return from France, Mr. Samuel Ireland deemed it expedient that I should be articled to a practitioner of the law; and application was in consequence made to Mr. Bingley, of New Inn, who follows the profession as a conveyancer in chancery; when, the terms being entered into, the articles were signed; and I from that moment attended his chambers, in order to acquire the necessary knowledge to enable

me, at a future period, to practise in the same branch of the profession.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS.

As many circumstances conjoined, during some months, to urge my production of the first documents, I shall relate a few of those events; which will tend to prove that the idea of imitating the hand-writing of Shakspeare gradually took possession of my mind, without my having been aware of the fact.

From the period of my arrival from France I had daily opportunities of hearing Mr. Samuel Ireland extol the genius of Shakspeare, as he would very frequently in the evening read one of his plays aloud, dwelling with enthusiasm on such passages as most peculiarly struck his fancy. At such periods, there was no divine attribute which Shakspeare did not possess, in Mr. Ireland's estimation: in short, the Bard of Avon was a god among men. However young I might be at that period, these very frequent praises lavished on our poet

led me to the perusal of his matchless works: and, although silent myself upon the subject, I nevertheless paid the greatest attention to every statement made by Mr. Ireland; thus gradually imbibing a similar fondness and veneration for every thing that bore a reference to the mighty father of the English stage.

PREDILECTION FOR OLD BOOKS.

As Mr. Samuel Ireland was very partial to antiquities of every description, and particularly old books, I had hourly opportunities of remarking the satisfaction which the possession of any rarity gave Mr. Ireland. This naturally impressed itself on my mind; and in consequence I became a follower of similar pursuits: which was soon a source of the greatest emulation, as nothing gave me so much gratification as exciting Mr. Ireland's astonishment on my production of some rare pamphlet which chance or research had thrown in my way. Even Mr. B*ndl*y of the Stamp office, a well-known col-

lector, who frequently called in Norfolk Street, on learning the rare tracts, &c., which I had collected, would request me to produce some of them; and on such occasions he would commend my pursuit, and express his astonishment at my good fortune. From these circumstances I acquired a real taste for the pursuit, which I followed with indefatigable zeal.

LOVE OF CHIVALRY.

This fondness for ancient books consequently led me to peruse their contents; Chaucer being among the first: after which, various old romances and tales of knights-errant excited my attention, to such a degree that I have often sighed to be the inmate of some gloomy castle; or that having lost my way upon a dreary heath, I might, like Sir Bertram, have been conducted to some enchanted mansion. Sometimes I have wished that by the distant chime of a bell I had found the hospitable porch of some old monastery, where, with the holy brotherhood,

having shared at the board their homely fare, I might afterwards have enjoyed upon the pallet a sound repose, and, with the abbots, blessing the ensuing morn, have hied me in pursuit of fresh adventures.

GOEFFREY CHAUCER.

The following is a specimen of one of my early imitations of the versification of that period.

ACROSTIC ON GEOFFREY CHAUCER,

In the style of John Lydgate, a writer of that period, and a disciple and friend of the Father of English poetry.

Lynes by thilke lerned clerke Dan Jan Lydgate, a monke of Burye, wrotenn on his freynde and maisterr Geoffrey Chaucer.

Con I yn rythms thilke clerke's fame make knowen,
Hondlynge so poorlee thys my quille
As rathere makes me hys fame kille;
Unlesse yt bene that gratefull minde alone
Con trumpe hys praise; since butt for hym I owne
Endlesse indeede had bene the travaile untoe mee
Ryghte praisse and thankes to offerr thus yn poesie.

MAHARAJA SERFOGI'S SARASWATI MAHAL. TANJORE

FONDNESS FOR OLD ARMOUR.

As knights were always clad in steel, I did not merely confine myself to that simple knowledge; but, having perused Grose's volume on Ancient Armoury, I became a collector of helmets, breastplates, gorgets, cuisses, &c.; and any part of the suit which was deficient, I, like a second Quixote, made up for with pasteboard. Thus was my bedchamber a regular armoury; and on many occasions, when the moon has shone upon a full suit, I have sat upright in my bed, and pictured scenes from my lord Orford's Castle of Otranto, &c.

PERCY'S BALLADS.

Although not partial to modern printed books, the subject matter of Dr. Percy's Relics of Ancient Poetry was a sufficient inducement for my becoming its possessor: nor has the infinite gratification I experienced on its first perusal diminished even to the present moment. I need scarcely add, that the poems contained in the vo-

lumes here alluded to gave additional zest to those pursuits whereto my mind was so entirely riveted.

LOVE AND MADNESS.

I cannot call to mind on what occasion Mr. Samuel Ireland read aloud some of the letters in Mr. Herbert Croft's very entertaining work under the above title; but I perfectly well remember that the conversation turned upon Chatterton; and, from the circumstances then cursorily mentioned, I was prompted to peruse the above work; when the fate of Chatterton so strongly interested me, that I used frequently to envy his fate, and desire nothing so ardently as the termination of my existence in a similar cause. Little did I then imagine that the lapse of a few months was to hold me forth to public view as the supposed discoverer of the Shaksperian manuscripts.

MAHARAJA SERFOGI'S SARASW

ACROSTIC ON CHATTERTON.

The following acrostic was penned shortly after my perusal of Mr. Herbert Croft's production.

Comfort and joy 's for ever fled :
He ne'er will warble more !
Ah me ! the sweetest youth is dead
That e'er tun'd reed before.
The hand of Mis'ry bow'd him low ;
E'en Hope forsook his brain :
Relentless man contemn'd his woe :
To you he sigh'd in vain.
Oppress'd with want, in wild despair he cried
'No more I'll live !' swallow'd the draught, and died.

CHATTERTON AND THE BLACK-LETTER BIBLE.

Some time after my discovery of the whole Shaksperian imposition, I quitted London, and remained for some weeks in the vicinity of Bristol. Curiosity naturally prompted me to visit the chamber in the turret of St. Mary Redcliff church wherein were deposited the papers to which Chatterton must have had access, and from which he pretended to have drawn his Rowley's poems. It contained the old

chests, which were empty; being in every other respect a cheerless stone room.---After inspecting this chamber, I waited upon Mrs. Newton, Chatterton's sister; who, as usual, produced the letters received from her brother, which she styled the only remaining relics of her dear Thomas. After having given them a very careful perusal (from which many proofs of fraternal affection were apparent), I proceeded to make more minute inquiries respecting Chatterton than were usually made by the few strangers that were prompted from curiosity to visit her. My questions and her answers, as nearly as I can recollect, were to the following effect.

"Do you call to mind any circumstance of a particular nature respecting your brother when a child?"

"He was always very reserved, and fond of seclusion: we often missed him for half a day together; and once I well remember his being most severely chastised for a long absence: at which he did not, however, shed one tear, but merely

said '*It was hard indeed to be whipped for reading.*' "

"Did he ever betray any extraordinary symptoms when young?"

"No others, sir, than what I have stated; except, indeed, that he was taught his letters from an old black-letter Bible, and would not take his lesson from any book of modern type."

This circumstance very forcibly struck me, and I endeavoured to acquire more knowledge on this head, but she recollected nothing at all interesting.

At the period when the Rowley papers had first come to light (as *he* averred), she informed me as follows:----"My brother, sir, had frequently brought home old parchments, deeds and other things, which were accounted of no value: and one day, having a use for them, I during his absence cut up several of them for threadpapers, and others to cover the schoolbooks of children: and while thus occupied, Thomas Chatterton came home. On perceiving what I had done, he threw himself

into the most violent passion, saying that I had destroyed what would have been to the family a fortune for ever; and instantly seising the books and threadpapers, collected them all together, and took them up stairs into his own chamber: after which they were never seen or heard of."

From the contiguity of their residence to Redcliff church, she also told me, he continually frequented the interior of that Gothic structure, where he would sit for hours, reading, beside the tomb of Canning; but this circumstance was at that time scarcely noticed. He was also frequently employed in ascending the towers of the church; where he would also read continually.

As to his person, his sister said that he was thin of body, but neatly made; that his features were by no means handsome, and yet, notwithstanding, the *tout-ensemble* was striking; which arose, she conceived, from the wonderful expression of his eyes, and more particularly of the left eye,

which, to use her own words, seemed at times, from its brilliancy, "to flash fire."

She then proceeded to acquaint me that some malevolent aspersions had been thrown out as to his moral character, and particularly his being partial to the society of abandoned women, which she positively denied, with tears in her eyes; stating that he was the best and most tender of brothers, never enjoying so much satisfaction as when he could present them some little token of his affection; that he always kept good hours at night, to her certain knowledge; and that by day he was by far too much taken up with books and his occupations to be a loose character.—As to his having a predilection for some female, she told me she believed that to have been the case; but, to the best of her knowledge, and from her soul (she assured me) she spoke it, no stain whatsoever could attach itself to his moral conduct.

Thus much I gleaned concerning the

unfortunate and neglected Chatterton; whose talents I revere, and whose fate I commiserate with unfeigned tears of sympathy; who, had he lived, would have undoubtedly ranked with the first men of genius that have graced our isle.

CHATTERTON AND THE BOOKSELLER.

Having called upon a bookseller in a bye street, among other topics I entered into conversation with the master of the shop respecting Chatterton, when the bookseller informed me that he well remembered the subject of my inquiry: after which he stated as follows respecting him:—That Chatterton, after school hours, had been in the habit of frequenting his shop; and that, not having money sufficient to make purchases, but his family being well known, he was permitted to take from the shelves any volume he chose to select: that he did not confine himself to any particular head, but perused promiscuously works on religion, history, biography, poetry, heraldry—and, in short, the

most abstruse treatises on every subject. The master of the shop also informed me that he frequently made transcripts, but was never communicative; merely bowing his head as he entered the shop, and making a similar obeisance on retiring.

MR. SAMUEL IRELAND'S WARWICKSHIRE AVON.

Having explained the various pursuits that occupied my boyish mind, and accounted for the first predilection I imbibed for the productions of Shakspeare, I shall now proceed to state such circumstances as immediately preceded my production of the manuscripts.—When Mr. Samuel Ireland had determined on making drawings illustrative of a work which he had it in contemplation to publish, on the picturesque scenery of the river Avon, I was made the companion of his journey; concerning which I shall state nothing excepting what relates to our bard; which circumstances, as will appear from the ensuing statements, greatly conduced to the subsequent production of the papers,

by riveting on my mind a thousand little anecdotes and surmises respecting the sub-lunary career of our dramatic lord.

JORDAN, THE STRATFORD POET.

On Mr. Samuel Ireland's arrival at Stratford-on-Avon, he entered with the utmost avidity upon every research which might tend to throw any new light upon the history of our dramatic bard: and in these excursions he was joined by a very honest fellow of the name of Jordan, who was bred up a carpenter, but having, or conceiving himself to possess, a spark of the Apollonian fire, he had dedicated himself to the Muses, and was commonly denominated "the Stratford Poet." This civil inoffensive creature had not been idle, on the score of Shakspeare; and had made frequent visits to the neighbouring villages and ancient houses, endeavouring if possible to glean any new anecdote or traditionary tale.

The first person visited by Mr. Ireland, accompanied by Jordan the poet and my-

self, was an old shopkeeper, who resided nearly opposite to our inn (but whose name I have forgotten); he being in possession of the remains of the mulberry tree, together with tobacco stoppers, busts, wafer seals, &c., all carved from the wood, which (like the pieces of the *real cross* in catholic countries) have so multiplied that I much fear a dozen full-grown mulberry trees would scarcely suffice to produce the innumerable mementoes already extant. Mr. Ireland having purchased some of these *bagatelles*, and a goblet which had certainly been carved many years back, and in all probability from the original tree, for which he gave an adequate price, we left this manufacturer of Shaksperian relics, and repaired to the church.

I think it necessary to state, that, although the events which took place at Stratford-on-Avon are arranged as if they had occupied no more than a single day, they notwithstanding kept Mr. Ireland a resident at that place for a week: during which period, I am fully convinced, not

one hour was spent but in the favourite pursuit; while the conversations at our dinners and suppers were still of Shakspeare, the immortal and divine Shakspeare.

STRATFORD CHURCH.

On entering the church, which contains the ashes of our immortal bard, it would be impossible for me to describe the thrill which then took possession of my soul.—Mr. Ireland, as usual, began his delineations of the monuments of Shakspeare, sir Thomas Lucy and John Coombe, which are in the chancel of Stratford church, and were afterwards engraved for Mr. Ireland's River Avon. While occupied on these drawings, he greatly reprehended the folly of having coloured the face and dress of the bust of Shakspeare; which was intended to beautify it, whereas it would have been much more preferable to have left the stone of its proper colour.—Mr. Ireland also made application in order to be permitted to take a plaster cast from the bust; which request had been

granted, on a previous occasion, to Mr. Malone; but as it was necessary to petition the corporation, and much time and perseverance being requisite, the idea was wholly relinquished.

THE CHARNEL-HOUSE.

As Mr. Ireland was very particular in his delineations of the three monuments, which occupied him for a considerable time, I strolled about the church; and on returning to the spot where Mr. Ireland was engaged, being just opposite the door of the charnel-house, I pushed it open, when the largest collection of human bones I had ever beheld instantly struck my regard. On mentioning this circumstance to Mr. Ireland, he approached the spot, to be an eye-witness of the fact; when he immediately remarked, that, if any such collection of bones was there at the time of Shakspeare, it was by no means improbable that they inspired him with a horror at the idea of so many remnants of the dead being huddled together in a vast heap, and

that he in consequence caused the following lines to be carved on the stone which covers his grave (being to the right of the charnel-house door, and directly under his bust), in order to deter any sacrilegious hand from removing his ashes. The lines, which are thus spelt and cut, run as follow:—

LINES ON THE FLAT STONE COVERING SHAKSPEARE'S GRAVE.

Good Frend for Iesus SAKE forbeare
To diGG T-E Duſt EncloAſed HERe
Bleſe be T-E Man $\overset{T}{Y}$ ſpares T-Es Stones
And curſt be He $\overset{T}{Y}$ moves my Bones.

QUOTATION FROM HAMLET.

That our bard had a great antipathy to the removal of the relics of the dead is not improbable; since, in the grave-diggers' scene in Hamlet, the following remarks are so appropriate to the subject, and highly expressive of his detestation of such conduct.

Ham. That scull had a tongue in it, and could sing

once!—How the knave jowls it to the ground, as if it were Cain's jaw-bone, that did the first murder!—— This might be the pate of a politician, which this ass now o'erreaches; one that could circumvent God: might it not?

Hor. It might, my lord.

Ham. Or of a courtier; which could say, *Good morrow, sweet lord! How dost thou, good lord?* This might be my lord such-a-one's horse, when he meant to beg it: might it not?

Hor. Ay, my lord.

Ham. Why, e'en so: and now my lady worm's! chapless, and knock'd about the muzzard with a sexton's spade!—Here's fine revolution, an we had the trick to see't!—Did these bones cost no more the breeding, but to play at loggats with them? Mine ache to think on't.

Act V., Scene i.

NEW PLACE.

Mr. Ireland visited the site of the ground whereon stood Shakspeare's mansion, which was called New Place, and was burned down at the great fire which took place at Stratford-on-Avon, and is now walled round. It was in the garden belonging to these premises that the mulberry tree stood; which was felled, many years since, by its then churlish owner, who conceived himself too much importuned by the cu-

riosity of strangers desirous of visiting the tree planted by the hand of Shakspeare.

That our poet must have retired from London with a very handsome competence there can be little doubt, as this very New Place, wherein he had resided, was during the civil wars selected by Charles the First and his queen to be their residence during the continuance of the court at the town of Stratford-on-Avon.

SHAKSPEARE'S BIRTH-PLACE.

On visiting the lowly mansion which had given birth to our immortal dramatist, Hart the butcher, the descendant of our bard by the female line, was still living. After much conversation with the old man, Mr. S. Ireland proceeded to make a correct drawing of the kitchen, wherein it is more than probable our great poet must have frequently been seated. A delineation was then taken of a little parlour adjoining; over the chimney-piece of which was a representation in plaster of David and Goliath, encircled with two rude

poetical lines, which were then in the modern hand, but had been lately altered from the black-letter characters in which they had originally appeared. It was in the tiling of this very house that the discovery was made of a profession of faith stated to be from the pen of John Shakspeare, the father of our bard, to which I shall allude on a future occasion.

APPLICATION FOR THE PURCHASE OF THE BIRTH-PLACE OF SHAKSPEARE.

At a period when the Shaksperian manuscripts were in their zenith, I was given to understand, that, by the death of old Hart, the descendant of Shakspeare, the tenement at Stratford-on-Avon which had witnessed the birth of our immortal bard was to be sold: in consequence of which I made application, by letter, to the attorney at Stratford-on-Avon who was appointed to dispose of the dwelling: and for a period it was really my intention, could I have made it convenient, to become the purchaser of the mansion in question, as nothing at that period would have afforded

me so much gratification as the being in possession of the avowed birth-place of Shakspeare. A correspondence between myself and the attorney, relative to the purchase, in consequence took place; after which the affair gradually died away.

CLOPTON HOUSE.

In consequence of the various inquiries set on foot by Mr. Ireland during his continuance at Stratford-on-Avon, he was at length given to understand, by some of the oldest inhabitants, that a tale was formerly told indicatory of some manuscripts having been conveyed for safety, at the time of the fire at Stratford, from New Place (the former residence of Shakspeare) to Clopton House, situated at a little distance from the scene of the conflagration. In consequence of this intelligence Mr. Ireland proceeded to the mansion in question; which proved to be of great antiquity. In one chamber was a very curious carved bedstead of oak, with silk hangings. This, together with all the furniture of the apart-

ment, was an heir-loom to the premises; having been the gift of king Henry the Seventh to sir Hugh Clopton, who was one of the lord-mayors of London during the reign of that monarch. In this antique mansion were innumerable chambers furnished in a similar manner, many of them totally darkened to obviate the expense of the tax upon window-lights; and in the cockloft were piles of mouldering household goods, all of the same remote antiquity: among the rest was an emblazoned representation, on vellum, of queen Elizabeth, the wife of Henry the Seventh, as she lay in state in the chapel of the tower of London, after having died in childbed; which curious relic the then owner of Clopton House gave to Mr. S. Ireland, as a "*picture* which was in his opinion of no service, because, being on vellum, it would not do *to light the fire*."

MAHARAJA SERFOJI'S SARASWATI MAHAL

CHAPEL IN A GARRET.

Near the cockloft just mentioned was a garret, the walls of which were adorned with rude paintings of scriptural subjects, hieroglyphical characters, and quotations from the New Testament. Among the designs, I recollect a large fish was delineated as being caught, and a hand drawing the string which was attached to the hook in the fish's mouth. Under this curious design were the following lines of rude poetry in black-letter characters: they may be found in Weever's Funeral Monuments.—

> Whether you rise yearlye,
> Or goe to bed late,
> Remember Christ Jesus,
> That died ffor your sake.

From the inquiries made by Mr. Ireland, we were given to understand that sir Hugh Clopton, or his descendant, being a very staunch catholic, had gained permission to have this garret consecrated at the time of the reformation, that the celebration of mass might take place in secret.

Having thus far digressed in my statement respecting the antiquity and great curiosity of this mansion, I shall again revert back to the general subject, and say,

IF TRUE, WHAT A CONFLAGRATION!

The person who occupied Clopton House, and rented the lands belonging to the estate, was what is usually denominated a gentleman-farmer; rich in gold and the worldly means of accumulating wealth, but devoid of every polished refinement.

On Mr. Ireland's arrival he introduced himself to Mr. Williams (for such was the gentleman's name); who invited us into a a small gloomy parlour; where he was shortly given to understand, by Mr. Ireland, that the motive of his visit was a desire to ascertain whether any old deeds or manuscripts were then existing, in any part of the mansion: and on a further statement, as to any papers of Shakspeare's being extant, the following was the reply made by Mr. Williams.—

" By G—d I wish you had arrived a

little sooner! Why, it isn't a fortnight since I destroyed several baskets-full of letters and papers, in order to clear a small chamber for some young partridges which I wish to bring up alive: and as to Shakspeare, why there were many bundles with his name wrote upon them. Why it was in this very fire-place I made a roaring bonfire of them.."

Mr. Ireland's feelings during this address, which were fully displayed in his countenance, may be more easily conceived than expressed: and it was with infinite difficulty he suffered Mr. Williams to proceed thus far; when, starting from his chair, he clasped his hands together, exclaiming

"My G—d! Sir, you are not aware of the loss which the world has sustained. Would to heaven I had arrived sooner!"

As my father concluded this ejaculation, Mr. Williams, calling to his wife, who was in an adjoining chamber, and who instantly came into the apartment where we were

seated (being a very respectable elderly lady), he thus addressed her:

"My dear, don't you remember bringing me down those baskets of papers from the partridge-room? and that I told you there were some about Shakspeare the poet?"

The old lady immediately replied as follows, having, in all probability, heard Mr. Ireland's address to her husband:

"Yes, my dear; I do remember it perfectly well! and, if you will call to mind my words, I told you not to burn the papers, as they might be of consequence."

Mr. Ireland, after expressing his regrets, requested permission to inspect the small chamber in question; which, however, contained nothing but the partridges. Having expressed a desire to go over the house, two lanterns were ordered up; when every chamber underwent the strictest scrutiny; during which research the before-mentioned furniture, chapel, &c., came under our

cognisance; but as to Shaksperian manuscripts, not a line was to be found.

VILLAGE OF SHOTERY.

As the cottage was still standing from whence our bard had married Anne Hathaway, we repaired to the village of Shotery, near Stratford, where it is situate; still having for our guide the indefatigable Jordan, the Stratford poet. After making a drawing of the premises, Mr. S. Ireland conversed for a considerable length of time with its then possessors; from whom he purchased a bugle purse, said to have been a present from our great poet to the object of his choice; as also an old oak chair, wherein it was stated our bard was used to sit, during his courtship, with his Anne upon his knee. The Shaksperian chair, which had a place in Mr. Ireland's study on being conveyed to London, was perfectly well known to all the inspectors of the manuscripts; MANY of whom I have often seen seated therein to hear the perusal of the papers; and their settled physiognomies have

frequently excited in me a desire for laughter which it has required every effort on my part to restrain.

THE CRAB TREE.

As I have before mentioned Jordan the Stratford poet, I shall give the following transcript from his own manuscript, still in my possession, without any alteration of language, spelling, &c.: having merely to state, that we took a ramble to Bitford, mentioned in the account so delivered, where Mr. S. Ireland made a very correct drawing of Shakspeare's crab tree, and another of the town of Bitford; both of which appeared in his Warwickshire Avon.

JORDAN'S MANUSCRIPT.

"The following Anecdote of Shakspeare is tho a traditional Story as well authenticated as things of this nature generally are. I shall therefore not hesitate relating it as it was Verbally delivered to me. Our Poet was extremely fond of drinking hearty draughts of English Ale and glory'd in being thought a person of superior eminence in that profession if I may be alowed the phrase. In his time but at what period it is not recorded there were two Companys or fraternitys

of Village Yeomanry who used frequently to associate to gether at Bidford a town pleasantly situate on the banks of the Avon about 7 Miles below Stratford, and Who boasted themselves Superior in the Science of drinking to any set of equal number in the Kingdom and hearing the fame of our Bard it was detirmined to Challenge him and his Companions to a tryal of their skill which the Stratfordians accepted and accordingly repaired to Bidford which place agreeable to both parties was to be the Scene of Contendtion But when Shakspeare and his Companions arrived at the distined spot to their disagreeable disapointment they found the Topers were gone to Evesham fair and were told that if they had a mind to try their strength with the Sippers, they were ther ready for the Contest, Shakesp^r. and his compainions made a Scoff at their Opponents but for want of better Company they agreed to the Contest and in a little time our Bard and his Compainions got so intollerable intoxicated that they was not able to Contend any longer and accordingly set out on their return to Stratford But had not got above half a mile on the road eer the found themselves unable to proceed any farther, and was obliged to lie down under a Crabtree which is still growing by the side of the road where they took up their repose till morning when some of the Company roused the poet and intreated him to return to Bidford and renew the contest which he declined saying I have drank with

" *Piping* Pebworth*, *Dancing* Marston
Haunted Hillborough, *Hungry* Grafton

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* This village is about seven miles from Stratford,

Dadgeing Exhall, *Papist* Wixford
Beggarly Broom * and *Drunken* † Bidford.

These eight villages, which are all perceptible from the elevated ground on which the crab tree stands, retain to the present hour the several appellations given to them in the above four lines.

DEATH OF FOSTER POWELL, THE PEDESTRIAN.

At the period of the signature of my articles, Mr. Bingley had one hackney-writer who constantly attended at chambers, as well as the celebrated Foster Powell, the

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and is to the present hour famed for the skill of its inhabitants on the pipe and tabor.

* The above place is well known, in the present day, for the wretchedness of its soil: from which it is natural to infer that at the period of Shakspeare the other denominations given to the remaining villages derived their origin from some traditionary tale annexed to these several places.

† As to the word *drunken* being prefixed to Bitford, the scene in which our bard had been engaged was sufficient in itself to justify him in applying the epithet: in addition to which, according to the above account, there were at that place two regular companies of drinkers, under the denominations of the *Topers* and the *Sippers*.

pedestrian, who was occupied in carrying such letters about the town as Mr. Bingley's business required. After some months the hackney-writer was discharged, and shortly after the death of Foster Powell occurred, when I was left alone at chambers; to which circumstance I attribute in a great measure the scope which was afforded me in the after production of the manuscripts; for, had there been any companion with me in chambers, it would have been utterly impossible that I should have accomplished the fabrication which on a subsequent occasion met the public view.

MIXTURE OF THE SHAKSPERIAN INK.

About six months previous to my attempting the Shaksperian papers, when I had not the smallest idea of embarking in that most arduous undertaking, I happened to purchase a small quarto tract, written by a gentleman of Lincoln's Inn, and dedicated by him to queen Elizabeth. The work in question contained a set of prayers, and was adorned round the margin of

each page with a very spirited wood-cut border, in the style of queen Elizabeth's prayer-book—a work well known to all collectors of curious volumes of that nature. These borders were carefully emblazoned, and the tract bound in vellum, with Elizabeth's arms stamped in gold on the cover, together with various other ornaments.

As the work was dedicated to the queen, and as from the appearance of the internal emblazoning, covers, &c., it had very probably once belonged to the library of that queen, I determined on endeavouring to establish it as the presentation copy from the author, whose name has now altogether escaped my recollection. In order to compass this, I weakened some common ink with water; and on a piece of old paper wrote a dedicatory epistle, as if from the author, to Elizabeth, requesting her gracious acceptance and countenance of his work. This letter I thrust between the vellum cover and the paper, which had originally stuck to it but had then given way: but previous to my presentation of it to Mr.

Ireland, I went to a bookbinder of the name of Laurie, who had bound many books for me, and resided in New Inn Passage, within two minutes' walk of the gentleman's chambers under whom I was articled to study the law as a chancery conveyancer. To this Mr. Laurie I produced the letter in question; and, as a proof that I had no very bad intention in having penned it, I unequivocally told him, with a smile, that I had just executed it, and was desirous of seeing how far Mr. Ireland would accredit it.—(I should have mentioned that two journeymen were present, and heard my unreserved conversation on the subject.)—Having requested to know what he thought of its appearance, Mr. Laurie stated, that it certainly seemed to him as if written many years back; when one of the journeymen, looking at the manuscript, informed me that he could give me a mixture that would resemble old ink much more than that which I had used; and, in consequence of my request, he immediately mixed together in a phial three different liquids used

by bookbinders in marbling the covers of their calf bindings. These ingredients being shaken up produced a fermentation; when, the froth having subsided, the liquid was of a dark brown colour. The young man then wrote his name with this mixture, but it was very faint on the paper; however, on holding it for a few seconds before the fire, the ink gradually assumed a very dark brown appearance.

Having paid him for his trouble, I wrote the dedicatory letter, and then presented it with the book to Mr. Ireland, who had no doubt as to its authenticity. It was with the same ink I afterwards wrote the Shaksperian manuscripts. Their scorched appearance originated in my being compelled to hold them to the fire, as before stated; and as I was constantly fearful of interruption, I sometimes placed them so near the bars as to injure the paper; which was done in order to complete and conceal them as speedily as possible from any unexpected person who might come suddenly into the chambers.

THE DILEMMA.

At a period when the public mind was occupied with the Shaksperian papers, and the daily newspapers teemed with paragraphs on the subject; when I was in the middle of my career, my ink failed me; and although hazardous the procedure, I positively applied to the very same journeyman in Mr. Laurie's shop, who for a shilling prepared a second bottle of the before-mentioned ink; which circumstance was never mentioned either by Mr. Laurie or his workman, although the fame of the manuscripts was perfectly well known to them, and that I was the person supposed to have discovered them. I scarcely need remark, that the circumstance of the dedicatory letter to queen Elizabeth, with the having twice procured the same liquid preparation, would in themselves have been quite sufficient to overturn the whole Shaksperian mass, and display to the world the naked truth; in the

research after which so much labour and criticism were expended.

RELIEVO OF OLIVER CROMWELL.

A very short time previous to the commencement of the suppositious manuscripts, I found at an old broker's shop a very spirited head of Oliver Cromwell, modelled in *terra cota*, which I was given to understand was the workmanship of a young man who had been bred up as a statuary, but had early fallen a victim to a putrid fever, which terminated his existence. To the back of this relievo, which was about the size of two hands when open, I affixed a piece of paper; whereon I wrote, with some of the ink before described, a label, intimating that the head in question had belonged to Cromwell, and was a gift from himself to Bradshaw, whose signature I affixed to the superscription.

On producing this plaster head to Mr. S. Ireland, it was shown to several persons eminent for their knowledge in sculpture,

who pronounced it as their firm opinion that the head in question *must have been modelled by Simon*, the justly celebrated artist who lived during the protectorship.

One very extraordinary circumstance attending this transaction was, that the name of Bradshaw, which I had affixed at random to the label on the back of the bust, when compared with the autograph engraved from the original death-warrant of Charles the First, proved to be as similar as possible.

I need scarcely add that the relievo was deemed a very great curiosity; and coming, as was supposed, from such hands as Cromwell's and Bradshaw's, was naturally conjectured to be a very striking resemblance of the original.

AN OPINION HAZARDED.

Your rigid critics will undoubtedly be prompted to smile at the above statement, and ever after be led to deride the opinion of sculptors as to ancient performances. I

certainly will so far coincide with that opinion as to assert, that, if the model had been produced as the performance of the young man who really modelled it, a slight commendation would have been passed upon his merits by those very persons who attributed it to Simon, and there the matter would have terminated.

Now let me submit a simple proposition. The workmanship was produced as from the hands of Simon. Either it possessed merit, or it did not. If it did possess merit sufficient to entitle it to the name of that sculptor, the young artist was certainly a rising genius as a modeller: if it did not possess sufficient spirit, it was the name of Simon being annexed which made it pass current. —I am myself no modeller; but, as far as nature goes, I can certainly form a judgement as to the execution of a relievo; and, in my humble opinion, the hand of Simon could not have executed a more masterly and spirited head than that before mentioned of the protector Cromwell.

So purblind, so unfeeling, is mankind,
That living genius vainly boasts its mind;
But, 'ray'd in Time's *erugo*, sages praise,
And give a modern Simon, SIMON's bays.

CONSEQUENCES OF THE TOUR.

On Mr. S. Ireland's return from his tour down the Warwickshire Avon, the circumstances before related had taken such root in my mind, that I was more partial than ever to the pursuit after antiquities of every description, and more particularly to every thing that bore the smallest affinity to our bard. Mr. S. Ireland's predilection for the name of Shakspeare seemed also to have increased by this visit to the birth-place of our mighty dramatist: his encomiums were unceasing; and he would frequently assert, that such was his veneration for the bard that he would willingly give half his library to become possessed even of his signature alone.

THE TANJORE MAHARAJA SERFOGI'S SARASWATI MAHAL. *

A FRUITLESS HUNT.

These conversations, so frequently repeated, led me to search all the old deeds at the gentleman's chambers where I was articled, in order to see whether chance might not throw some instrument in my way bearing the autograph of Shakspeare. This step proved abortive; in consequence of which I frequented the stalls of several venders of old paper and parchment, but all to no effect; till, wearied at length, I relaxed in my pursuit, and for a short period thought no more of the business.

FIRST STEP.

I cannot recollect upon what particular occasion, but I rather think I had been occupied in the perusal of the mortgage-deed formerly in the possession of David Garrick, esq., which is to be found printed in Johnson and Steevens's Shakspeare, when the idea first struck me of imitating the signature of our bard, in order to gratify Mr. Ireland. In consequence of this, I

made a tracing of the *fac-similes* of Shakspeare's signature, both to his will in the Commons and the deed before mentioned, which are to be found in the aforesaid edition of Shakspeare's works. I also hastily noted down the heads of this deed; and thus fortified I repaired to chambers, in order to produce the instrument which speedily followed.

WILLIAM SHAKSPEARE AND MICHAEL FRASER.

Having cut off a piece of parchment from the end of an old rent-roll at chambers, I placed a deed before me of the period of James the First, and then proceeded to imitate the style of the penmanship as well as possible, forming a lease as between William Shakspeare and John Heminge with one Michael Fraser and Elizabeth his wife, whereto I affixed the signature of Shakspeare, keeping the transcript of his original autographs before me; while the superscription of Michael Fraser was executed with my left hand, in order the

better to conceal it as being from the same pen.

FORMATION OF SEALS.

The contents of the lease being finished, and the signatures subscribed, I found much difficulty in annexing the seals, which, at the period of James the First, were not similar to those of the present day, being formed of malleable wax, and stamped upon narrow pieces of parchment hanging from the deed directly under the signatures. Having affixed the strips of parchment according to the method adopted in the reign of James, I in the first instance endeavoured to heat in a shovel the wax of some old seals which I had cut from deeds; but this proved impracticable, as the wax, from age, having lost its moisture in a great degree, instead of melting rather crumbled over the heat. At length I adopted the expedient of heating a knife, with which I cut an old seal in two without its cracking; and having with a penknife carefully scooped a ca-

vity on the opposite side to that bearing the impression, I therein placed the strip of parchment pendent from the deed; and having heated some wax of a less ancient date, I placed it when hot within the remaining part of the cavity, and thus formed a back to the seal; but as the fore and hind part of the seal, on account of the different ages of the wax, varied in colour, I again moistened the seal before the fire, and in that state rubbed soot and coal-ashes over it, which thereby became incorporated with the seal, and in a great measure screened the colour from observation.

Having with much labour and contrivance accomplished the two seals, I determined on presenting this first specimen to Mr. S. Ireland.

I should not omit stating the reason why a deed was produced in preference to any loose paper which I might have formed without so much pains. The fact is, that I had no idea whatsoever of imitating the hand-writing of Shakspeare fur-

ther than the autograph in question; neither had I then the vanity of attempting any imposition in imitation of his style. In addition to these circumstances, a law instrument was assuredly the most calculated to stamp validity on the signature produced.

PRESENTATION OF THE DEED.

It was about eight o'clock, being after my evening's attendance at chambers, that I presented the deed in question. Mr. S. Ireland's family were present; and, if I mistake not, another person;—the fact being precisely as follows:—I had placed the deed within my bosom; when, after informing Mr. Ireland that I had a very great curiosity to show him, I drew it forth and presented it, saying—"There, sir! what do you think of that?" Mr. Ireland, opening the parchment, regarded it for a length of time with the strictest scrutiny: he then examined the seals; and afterwards proceeded to fold up the instrument; and on presenting it to me he

replied—"I certainly believe it to be a genuine deed of the time." Returning it immediately into Mr. Ireland's hand, I then made answer—"If you think it so, I beg your acceptance of it." Mr. Ireland, immediately taking the keys of his library from his pocket, presented them to me, saying—"It is impossible for me to express the pleasure you have given me by the presentation of this deed: there are the keys of my book-case; go and take from it whatsoever you please; I shall refuse you nothing." I instantly returned the keys into Mr. Ireland's hand, saying—"I thank you, sir; but I shall accept of nothing." Mr. Ireland, rising from his chair, selected from his books a scarce tract, with engraved plates, called "Stokes the Vaulting Master," which he peremptorily insisted I should accept. And such was the precise manner of my presentation of the fictitious deed between Shakspeare and Fraser, that being the first document produced.

THE QUINTIN.

The morning after my presentation of the lease, the first person sent to by Mr. Samuel Ireland was sir Fr*d*r**k Ed*n, who, after a very strict examination of the deed, gave it as his decided opinion that the instrument was valid; and on looking at the impressions on the seals, that under the signature of Shakspeare he affirmed was a representation of a machine called the Quintin; for an account of which Stow the historian was referred to; who states that the Quintin was used by the young men, in order to instruct them in the art of tilting on horseback with the lance; the machine being constructed as follows:—An upright beam was firmly fixed in the earth, at the top of which was a bar placed horizontally, moving on a pivot. To a hook at one end of the bar was hung a large iron ring; while from the other extremity was suspended a large bag filled with sand. The object of the tilter was to unhook the ring, and bear it off upon

the point of his lance when at full gallop, which if he failed to accomplish with dexterity, the bar moving swiftly on the pivot swang round the bag, which, coming in contact with the rider's back, was almost certain of unhorsing him. As this amusement seemed to bear so great an analogy to the name *Shake-spear*, it was immediately conjectured that the seal must have belonged to our bard; and from that moment the Quintin was gravely affirmed to be the seal always used by our monarch of the drama.

I shall merely state, that, on cutting the seal in question from an old deed at chambers, I never even looked at the impression; and, if such had been the case, I should not have known that the stamp on the wax represented the Quintin—a machine of which I had never heard until after the delivery of the deed as before stated.

...ORE MAHARAJA SERFOGI'S SARASWATI...

ORIGINAL MORTGAGE-DEED.

Upon the full discovery of every circumstance being made to Albany Wallis, esq., and my informing him, that, with the alteration of the names only, I had nearly worded my lease from the mortgage-deed formerly in the possession of David Garrick, esq. (which has been so frequently printed, and the words I had taken down, as before stated), Mr. Wallis in consequence referred to a copy of that deed; and, on comparing it with Mr. Ireland's publication of the Miscellaneous Papers, wherein the spurious deed of Shakspeare and Fraser is printed, he was astonished on finding the similarity that existed between them; and expressed his wonder, that, out of so many persons conversant with every thing relating to Shakspeare, and who had examined the papers, no one should have remarked the obvious plagiary throughout the deed in question.

INCITEMENTS.

Numerous persons flocked to Mr. Ireland's house in order to inspect the deed, who all coincided with sir F. Ed*n in believing the instrument valid; and, after the lapse of some few days, it was hinted, that in all probability many papers of Shakspeare's might be found by referring to the same source from whence the deed had been drawn. This suggestion was frequently uttered in my presence: and being thus urged forward to produce what really was not in existence, I then determined on essaying some composition in imitation of the language of Shakspeare. I must, however, solemnly affirm, that had not such incitements been used, I never should have attempted a second document—my real object having been to give Mr. S. Ireland satisfaction: that wish accomplished, my purpose was fully answered.

JOHN SHAKSPEARE'S PROFESSION OF FAITH.

Having frequently heard of the bigoted profession of faith found at the birth-place of Shakspeare, and said to have been written by John Shakspeare, our poet's father, wherein the effusions of the most determined catholic are expressed, I had recourse to the plan of writing a profession of faith for our bard, which I executed accordingly.

A SHEET OF OLD PAPER.

The sheet of paper on which the profession of faith was written was the outside of several others, on some of which accounts had been kept in the reign of Charles the First; and being at that time wholly unacquainted with the water-marks used in the reign of queen Elizabeth, I carefully selected two half sheets not having any mark whatsoever, on which I penned my first effusion; keeping the *fac-similes* of Shakspeare's original autographs before me.

SHAKSPEARE A CATHOLIC.

Having the most rooted antipathy to every thing like superstition and bigotry, and having heard it very frequently surmised that our great poet, like his father, was no protestant, but of the catholic persuasion (particularly on account of the language made use of by the Ghost in Hamlet as to purgatory *, &c.), I determined, if possible, to decide the point on the other hand, by making the profession of faith appear to be written by a sincere votary of the protestant religion.

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* *Ghost.* I am thy father's spirit,
Doom'd for a certain term to walk the night,
And for the day confin'd to fast in fires,
Till the foul crimes done in my days of nature
Are burn'd and purg'd away. But that I am forbid
To tell the secrets of my prison-house,
I could a tale unfold whose lightest word
Would harrow up thy soul, freeze thy young blood,
Make thy two eyes, like stars, start from their spheres,
Thy knotty and combined locks to part,
And each particular hair to stand on end
Like quills upon the fretful porcupine.
Act. I., Sc. v.

A COMPOSITION UNSTUDIED.

As many encomiums were passed upon the following composition, I have thought it necessary to state, that the effusion was altogether unstudied, being committed to paper, in the disguised hand and redundancy of letters in the spelling, just as the thoughts arose in my own mind, without any previous transcript or subsequent alteration whatsoever.

The word *leffee*, which appears in this article, and which was so much the subject of cavil, was intended to be *leafless;* and to the perturbation of the moment only is to be attributed that literal error, which was afterwards swelled into a flagrant proof of the invalidity of the composition as coming from the pen of Shakspeare.

WILLIAM SHAKSPEARE'S PROFESSION OF FAITH.

I beynge nowe offe sounde Mynde doe hope thatte thys mye wyshe wille atte mye deathe bee acceeded toe as I nowe lyve in Londonne ande as mye soule maye perchance soone quitte thys poore Bodye it is mye desire thatte inne suche case I maye bee carryed toe

mye native place ande thatte mye Bodye bee there quietlye interred wythe as little pompe as canne bee, ande I doe nowe inne these mye seyriouse moments make thys mye professione of fayth and which I doe moste solemnlye believe I doe fyrste looke toe oune lovynge and greate God and toe hys gloriouse sonne Jesus I doe alsoe beleyve thatte thys mye weake ande frayle Bodye wille retturne toe duste butte forre mye soule lette God judge thatte as toe hymselfe shalle seeme meete O omnipotente and greate God I am full offe Synne I doe notte thynke myselfe worthye offe thye grace ande yette wille I hope forre evene the poore prysonerre whenne bounde with gallyng Irons evenne hee wille hope for Pittye ande whenne the teares offe sweete repentance bathe hys wretched pillowe he then looks ande hopes forre pardonne thenne rouse mye Soule ande lette hope thatte sweete cherysher offe alle afforde thee comforte alsoe O Manne whatte arte thou whye considereste thou thyselfe thus gratelye where are thye greate thye boasted attrybutes buryed loste forre everre inne colde Deathe O Manne whye attemptest thou toe searche the greatnesse offe the Almyghtye thou doste butte loose thye labourre more thou attempteste more arte thou loste tille thye poore weake thoughtes arre elevated toe theyre summite ande thenne as snowe fromme the leffee tree droppe ande dystylle themselves tille theye are noe more O God manne as I am frayle bye nature fulle offe Synne yette greate God receyve me toe thye bosomme where alle is sweete contente ande happynesse alle is blysse where dyscontente isse neverre hearde butte where oune

Bonde offe freyndshippe unytes alle Menne forgyve O Lorde alle oure Synnes ande withe thye greate goodnesse take usse alle to thye Breaste O cheryshe usse like the sweete Chickenne thatte under the coverte offe herre spreadynge Wings Receyves herre lyttle Broode ande hoverynge overre themme keepes themme harmlesse ande in safetye

Wm Shakspeare

FORMATION OF LETTERS.

In penning this profession of faith I formed the twelve different letters contained in the christian and sir names of Wm. Shakspeare as much as possible to resemble the tracings of his original autographs; and I was also particular in introducing as many capital *doubleyous* and *esses* as possible. The other letters were ideal, and written to correspond as nearly as might be with the general style of the twelve letters used in Shakspeare's names as written by himself.

VARIETY IN THE PENMANSHIP.

As the penmanship of the profession of faith was my first essay beyond a simple

autograph, it was written with some caution: but had any person minutely compared the style of writing therein produced with those manuscripts which were penned after I had acquired a facility in committing to paper the disguised hand, he must instantly have discovered the difference; which was, indeed, so obvious, that the hand producing the profession of faith would scarcely be thought, upon examination, to have been the same that committed to paper the great bulk of the manuscripts.

GENERAL OPINIONS.

The opinions delivered as to the language of the profession of faith were unanimous—every person allowing the genuine feeling that breathed throughout the whole composition; which, it was stated, fully evinced it to be from the pen of our great dramatist: nor was my satisfaction a little heightened on finding that this effusion banished at once every idea of Shakspeare's catholicism from the minds of those whom I had frequently

heard hazarding that opinion as to his religious tenets.

"THUS BAD BEGINS, AND WORSE REMAINS BEHIND."

After the production of the profession of faith, I was much questioned as to the source from whence the manuscripts were drawn; and it was then for the first time I began to discover the unpleasant predicament in which I had involved myself by the production of the papers; for to screen a falsehood it was absolutely necessary to have recourse to a second duplicity: in consequence of which the following story was framed, which was invariably told to every individual who requested satisfaction on that head.

STORY OF THE UNKNOWN GENTLEMAN.

I informed the public, that, having made an acquaintance at a coffeehouse with a gentleman of fortune, who was from my conversation given to understand that I had a great predilection for every thing like antiquity, he had in consequence re-

quested that I would pay him a visit; stating at the same time that he had many old papers, which had descended to him from his ancestors, who had practised the law, among which some might in all probability be found worthy my notice, in which case he would willingly make me a present of them. I further added that a morning was appointed for my waiting upon him, but that, conceiving he might have only stated the above in order to turn me into ridicule, I did not pay any attention to the day specified; but happening, some mornings after, to pass near his chambers, the circumstance came to my recollection, and I in consequence determined on paying my friend a visit. I then observed, that on my entrance into the apartment the gentleman appeared rather hurt at my remissness in not having kept my appointment with him; when, after a suitable apology, he desired me to go into an adjoining apartment, where I observed a vast collection of old deeds and papers tied up in bundles

and numbered, which I instantly began to inspect, when, after having looked over some parcels, I discovered, to my utter astonishment, the deed between our bard and Michael Fraser, bearing the signature of Shakspeare. I then proceeded to state, that, my first surprise having subsided, I took the above-mentioned deed to my friend, who also appeared much astonished, not conceiving any such document had been in his possession; that he remarked it was certainly a very curious instrument, but that having promised me every thing I should find worthy my notice, he would not be worse than his word, and, desiring only that I would make him a fair transcript in my own hand-writing, he told me the deed was at my service.

Such was the manner in which I accounted for my having become possessed of the manuscripts, till further questioning produced the following additional tale.

MAHARAJA SERFOGI'S SARASWATI MAHAL ... THE TANJORE

ANSWER TO FURTHER DOUBTS.

As the manuscripts became rather voluminous, great stress was laid upon their value, and it was thought a matter of astonishment how any man in his proper senses could think of giving away such a treasure. In order to reconcile inquirers to this objection, I stated that during my research among the deeds of my friend I had discovered one which established his right to certain property that had long been a subject of litigation; on which account he conceived the giving me the Shaksperian manuscripts no other than a just recompense for the service I had thus rendered him.

CONCEALMENT OF THE SUPPOSED DONOR'S NAME.

As every individual inspecting the papers remarked that it would have been his pride to be known as the original possessor of the documents produced, I was in consequence questioned as to the name of the donor: my reply to which was to the fol-

lowing effect: that the gentleman being possessed of a large fortune, and being well aware of the inquiries which must take place on the production of the papers, did not think fit to subject himself to the impertinent questionings of every individual who conceived himself licensed to demand an explanation concerning them; that he in consequence gave me the documents as mere curiosities, exacting from me at the same time a most solemn asseveration that I would keep his name for ever concealed.

And such was the method adopted to preclude every future inquiry as to the name and residence of the supposed original donor of the manuscripts.

DRS. P*RR AND WH*RT*N ON THE PROFESSION OF FAITH.

Of the persons who visited Mr. Samuel Ireland when the manuscripts were not very voluminous, the above gentlemen were among the most conspicuous. On their arrival, Mr. Ireland was alone in his

study to receive them; but, by the desire of the visitants, I was shortly after summoned before them, to answer interrogatories. I confess I had never before felt so much terror, and would almost have bartered my life to have evaded the meeting: there was, however, no alternative, and I was under the necessity of appearing before them. Having replied to their several questionings as to the discovery of the manuscripts and the secretion of the gentleman's name, one of these two inspectors of the manuscripts addressed me, saying,

"Well, young man; the public will have just cause to admire you for the research you have made, which will afford so much gratification to the literary world."

To this panegyric I bowed my head, and remained silent.

PERUSAL OF THE PROFESSION OF FAITH.

While Mr. Ireland read aloud the profession of faith, Drs. P*rr and Wh*rt*n

remained silent, paying infinite attention to every syllable that was pronounced; while I continued immovable, awaiting to hear their dreaded opinion. This effusion being ended, one of the above gentlemen (who, as far as my recollection can recal the circumstance, I believe to have been Dr. P*rr) thus addressed himself to Mr. Ireland:

" *Sir, we have very fine passages in our church service, and our litany abounds with beauties; but here, sir, here is a man who has distanced us all!*"

When I heard these words pronounced I could scarcely credit my own senses; and such was the effect they produced upon me, that I knew not whether to smile or not. I was, however, very forcibly struck with the encomium; and shortly after left the study, ruminating on the praise which had been unconsciously lavished, by a person so avowedly erudite, on the unstudied production of one so green in years as myself.

INCITEMENT OF VANITY.

On entering the back dining-room, which was contiguous to Mr. Ireland's study, I reclined my head against the window frame, still ruminating on the words I had heard; when vanity first took possession of my mind, to which every other consideration yielded: fired with the idea of possessing genius to which I had never aspired, and full of the conviction that my style had so far imitated Shakspeare's as to deceive two persons of such allowed classical learning as Drs. P*rr and Wh*r-t*n, I paid little attention to the sober dictates of reason, and thus implicitly yielded myself to the gilded snare which afterwards proved to me the source of indescribable pain and unhappiness.

MR. P*WS*N AND THE PROFESSION OF FAITH.

For the accuracy of the following statement I cannot avouch, not having been present upon the occasion; but, from what was frequently stated, I was given to

understand that the above gentleman, after inspecting all the manuscripts then in Mr. Ireland's possession, appeared so perfectly well satisfied respecting them that Mr. Ireland was emboldened to demand of him whether he felt reluctance to subscribing his name among the list of believers in the validity of the manuscripts; upon which occasion Mr. P*ws*n very drily made answer,

"I thank you, sir; but I never subscribe my name to professions of faith of any nature whatsoever."

PURCHASE OF OLD PAPER.

Being thus urged forward to the production of more manuscripts, it became necessary that I should possess a sufficient quantity of old paper to enable me to proceed: in consequence of which I applied to a bookseller named Verey, in Great May's Buildings, St. Martin's Lane, who, for the sum of five shillings, suffered me to take from all the folio and quarto volumes in his shop the fly-leaves which

they contained. By this means I was amply stored with that commodity: nor did I fear any mention of the circumstance by Mr. Verey, whose quiet unsuspecting disposition I was well convinced would never lead him to make the transaction public: in addition to which, he was not likely even to know any thing concerning the supposed Shaksperian discovery by myself; and even if he had, I do not imagine that my purchase of the old paper in question would have excited in him the smallest degree of suspicion.

THE JUG WATER-MARK.

As I was fully aware, from the variety of water-marks which are in existence at the present day, that they must have constantly been altered since the period of Elizabeth, and being for some time wholly unacquainted with the water-marks of that age, I very carefully produced my first specimens of the writing on such sheets of old paper as had no mark whatsoever. —Having heard it frequently stated that

the appearance of such marks on the papers would have greatly tended to establish their validity, I listened attentively to every remark which was made upon the subject, and from thence I at length gleaned the intelligence that a *jug* was the prevalent water-mark of the reign of Elizabeth: in consequence of which I inspected all the sheets of old paper then in my possession; and having selected such as had the jug upon them, I produced the succeeding manuscripts upon these; being careful, however, to mingle with them a certain number of blank leaves, that the production on a sudden of so many water-marks might not excite suspicion in the breasts of those persons who were most conversant with the manuscripts.

THE WITTY CONUNDRUM.

Previous to the execution of the letter as from Shakspeare to Cowley the player, I had delineated the curious sketch of his head, with its appurtenances, which I pro-

duced it to my father, who seemed inclined to turn it into ridicule as an inexplicable paper and of no consequence. Finding such to be the case, I had recourse to the expedient of writing a letter as from Shakspeare to maister Cowley the player, which I pretended to have found during my research of the ensuing day, and which epistle instantly reflected a degree of consequence on the *witty conundrum* in question.

DISQUISITIONS ON THE WITTY CONUNDRUM.

As it was supposed that nothing could possibly come from the hand of Shakspeare which did not possess some sterling good, the witty conundrum became an object of learned investigation; but all to no effect: for although many sapient opinions were hazarded as to its real meaning, nothing conclusive was decided upon: which is, indeed, not at all to be wondered at, as when it was by me committed to paper I had no particular end in view, neither was there any meaning whatsoever annexed to

the drawing of the supposed witty conundrum.

IMPROMPTU.

How oft we find the wisest doat,
And deem mere nought a treasure!
Age still admires a petticoat,
As toys give infants pleasure.
By this we must confess, however loth,
Men are but babies of a larger growth.

LETTER TO MAISTER COWLEY.

By the very familiar style I adopted in the letter from our bard to Richard Cowley, supposed to have enclosed the witty conundrum, it was by all inspectors of the manuscripts asserted that Shakspeare must have been a kind good-natured character, and of a very playful disposition: nor can I omit making mention of the superscription to this epistle, which frequently excited risibility: it ran as follows.—

THE SUPERSCRIPTION.

Toe Masterre Richard Cowley
dwellinge atte oune Masterre
Hollis a draperre inne
the Wattlynge Streete
Londoune.

QUEEN ELIZABETH'S LETTER.

During the frequent conversations that took place after the production of the first documents, I heard peculiar stress laid by the honourable Mr. B***g on a letter supposed to have been written by James the First to Shakspeare, and which it was stated might be found among the papers; but as so many conversations were held upon that subject, I thought the production of such a letter would be too obvious: in addition to which, I was totally unacquainted with the writing and autograph of that monarch. I therefore determined on fabricating a letter from queen Elizabeth to our bard: in the execution of which I was greatly facilitated by an original autograph of that princess in Mr. S. Ireland's possession, which I could always procure without his knowledge, and from which I made a hasty tracing when alone. From the same *fac-simile* I also formed the letters throughout my spurious epistle from that queen to Shakspeare.

My principal object in the production of this letter was to make our bard appear of so much consequence in his own time as to be personally noticed by so great and politic a princess as our Elizabeth.—As to the verses alluded to in *my gracious* epistle, they certainly never had existence, to the best of my knowledge: at any rate I may safely assert they could not have been one half so despicable as the wretched attempts at *te he* versification so facetiously introduced in Mr. Malone's Inquiry—*vide* page 100.—

> "Each titled dame deserts her rolls and tea,
> And all the maids of honour cry *te he!*"

However, for the sake of proving how far commentatorship is of utility, I refer the public to pages 101 and 102 of Mr. Malone's Inquiry, which are literally filled with notes upon twenty-two lines of Grub-street poetry, of which the above couplet is a part. These lines are meant to convey sarcasm; in which the writer has as well succeeded as in his attempt at poetry.

THE LAUNDRESS.

It is a very curious fact, that the female who attended at the chambers where I was articled was present during the whole of my fabrication of Elizabeth's supposed letter; which, when completed, I gave into her hands, and requested to know whether she would not have conceived it very old; to which she replied in the affirmative; adding, with a laugh, *that it was very odd I could do such unaccountable strange things.*

Had this circumstance been generally known, it would unquestionably have led to the developement of the whole Shaksperian forgery. Indeed, the same effect might have been produced by the disclosure of my fabrication of the dedicatory letter to the religious tract in the time of Elizabeth; or of my procurement of ink from the bookbinder's man: not to mention the quantity of old paper purchased by me: all which were facts known to individuals who would have come forward

had not their pursuits been so diametrically opposite to every thing like literature and a Shaksperian controversy.

A SECOND HINT.

To the same gentleman who gave me the first idea of writing a letter as from queen Elizabeth to our bard, by his frequent mention of the letter said to have been written by James (her successor) to Shakspeare, I am also indebted for the idea of writing a letter to lord Southampton, with its answer, which originated in that gentleman's so frequently laying a stress on the supposed bounty of that nobleman to our bard, and the light which would be thrown on the fact should any document be discovered denoting the sum so given by his lordship. Profiting by this information, I took a fit opportunity, and then produced

COPY OF MY LETTER TO HIS GRACE OF SOUTHAMPTON.

On writing this letter, as in the case of the profession of faith, I kept the tracings

from Shakspeare's original autographs before me, and so penned the epistle, without making any studied transcript, but merely committing my thoughts to paper in the disguised hand as they occurred to my mind. As I was, however, fearful that some document might afterwards be discovered tending to prove the exact sum sent by lord Southampton to Shakspeare, I thought it most expedient not to make mention of any specific donation, and therefore said, in the letter in question,

"Doe notte esteeme me a sluggarde nor tardye for thus havynge delayed to answere or rather toe thank you for youre greate Bountye" *&c.*

Having completed the letter in question, I was on the point of folding it up, and directing it to lord Southampton, when suddenly the following idea struck me.—

A SECOND THOUGHT.

As this letter of thanks was supposed to be sent by Shakspeare to lord Southampton, how could it possibly revert back into the possession of our bard?—After some

cogitation, I had recourse to the expedient of writing at the top of the letter "Copye of mye Letter toe hys Grace offe Southampton:" to which transcript (supposed to have been kept by William Shakspeare) from the epistle believed to have been sent to his lordship, I affixed lord Southampton's spurious answer.

LORD SOUTHAMPTON'S ANSWER.

As I had not the smallest conception that any correspondence or autographs of lord Southampton were in existence, and being indeed at that time totally unaware of the immense collections of ancient papers that are extant throughout the kingdom, I conceived that I might with impunity give the letter in question in any style of writing I thought fit, and therefore penned his lordship's gracious communication with my left hand, that no similitude might appear between it and the copy of Shakspeare's epistle accompanying it. The mode of writing adopted by me in his lordship's letter will not, however, upon ex-

amination, be found so very dissimilar to the signature of Fraser on the spurious lease written with the same hand. Every person viewing the manuscripts was surprised at his lordship's miserable penmanship: and indeed, when compared with the *fac-simile* of his original autograph given by Mr. Malone in his Inquiry, nothing can be more opposite, as lord Southampton in reality did write a very neat intelligible hand.

GENERAL OPINION.

The letters in question were deemed highly curious and valuable, and the style of Shakspeare's was applauded beyond measure: but it was on all hands lamented that the exact sum so beneficently given by his lordship to Shakspeare was not therein specified, as in that case all doubts upon the subject would have been ended.

LOVE-LETTER AND VERSES TO ANNE HATHAWAY.

As our great dramatist was married very early in life to one Anne Hathaway of the village of Shotery (at no great distance

from Stratford-on-Avon), I became desirous of introducing to the world one of his love effusions of that early period: on which account was penned his epistle to that lady, including five stanzas of poetry and a braid of hair supposed to have been sent to her as a token of his unalterable affection.

LOCK OF HAIR.

As the engraving of Shakspeare prefixed to the folio edition of his plays, and executed by Droeshout, represents our bard as having short, straight, and wiry hair, I selected a lock of a similar kind, then in my possession (which in my boyish days had been given me as a *gage d'amour*), conceiving it very appropriate to my purpose.

SILK TWIST.

Having purchased of one Yardley, a vender of old parchments in Clare Market, some patents of the reigns of Henry VIII., Mary, and Elizabeth, with the great seals of England pendent thereto (being affixed to the parchment with thick woven silk,

as was usually the custom at those periods, and being about four inches in length), the idea struck me that the use of one of the pieces of woven silk in question would give an imposing air of genuineness to the lock of hair. After putting this expedient into effect I wrote the letter to Anne Hathaway, wherein I laid great stress on the workmanship of the silk, as if executed by the hand of Shakspeare: the words ran as follow:

"I doe assure thee no rude hande hathe knottedde itte, thye Willys alone hathe done the worke neytherre the gyldedde bauble thatte envyronnes the heade of Magestye noe norre honourres moste weyghtye woude give mee halfe the joye as didde thysse mye lyttle worke forre thee" *&c. &c.*

I must confess that when I call to my recollection the numerous persons who inspected the papers, and of course the lock of hair with its silken appendage, and who were in the daily habit of inspecting grants, charters, patents, &c., most of them having a similar twist in order to affix the great seal to the parchments, I am much

astonished that the silk in question should have never been remarked by any one frequenting Mr. Ireland's house.

RINGS.

Small quantities of the hair being carefully taken from the original lock, were distributed into several rings; but I shall refrain from making mention of their wearers: it is sufficient for me that they were believers in the authenticity of the manuscripts.

MR. COLLET AND EDWARD THE FOURTH.

A short time after the letter and the lock of hair had appeared, it was by some persons most ridiculously asserted that human hair could not have resisted the lapse of time from Shakspeare's days to the present æra; and in order to ridicule the affair, it was stated that one Mr. Collet, a hair merchant, was to come in all the pomp of his trade and scrutinise the Shaksperian *curl*. However, to terminate the dispute in question, it is well known that human hair

has been discovered in abundance on the heads of embalmed bodies which have remained centuries in the earth; and in many instances it has even been found to grow after death: one proof of this is to be adduced, which was witnessed by many persons still living; for when the vault of Edward IV., who died in the year 1483, was discovered by chance in the chapel at Windsor, the hair of the head and the beard were found flowing, and as strong as hair cut from the head of a living person. I myself saw a piece of the hair taken from the beard of that monarch, which was very strong, and of a reddish colour.

PROMISSORY NOTE OF HAND TO JOHN HEMINGES.

One of the earliest documents produced to strengthen the validity of the fabricated mass, was a promissory note of hand appearing to have been given to John Heminges by William Shakspeare as a compensation for business done at the Globe theatre, and for his great trouble in going down for him to Stratford-on-Avon. The

note of hand was payable at one month, and was for the sum of *five pounds and five shillings English money.*

JOHN HEMINGES' RECEIPT.

To this curious note I affixed a receipt with some wax, as from John Heminges, specifying the payment of the money on the very day the month expired; from which it was generally conjectured that Shakspeare, in addition to his other good qualities, was very punctual in all pecuniary transactions. This document was signed with my left hand; and, however trivial it may be esteemed, proved in the end of infinite consequence, as will appear from the ensuing statements.

JOHN HEMINGES' ORIGINAL SIGNATURE.

When the manuscripts became voluminous and had excited general attention, having one day returned to Mr. Samuel Ireland's house at three o'clock (the period of my leaving chambers), I was, to my no small astonishment, informed as follows:

—That Mr. Albany Wallis had been with Mr. Ireland about half an hour before, and had stated, with a smile, that he came to overturn at once all the Shaksperian discovery: that he (Mr. Wallis) then produced a deed signed by John Heminges, in a hand altogether different from that of the signature affixed to my receipt; which signature, as before stated, had been committed to paper with my left hand, for at the period when it was fabricated I did not conjecture that any document bearing the autograph of John Heminges would ever appear to invalidate the suppositious one annexed by me to the receipt.

On learning this circumstance I was terror-struck, and immediately requested Mr. Ireland to accompany me down to Mr. Wallis's, in order that I might inspect the instrument in question, which had been discovered among the numerous law documents in Mr. Wallis's possession; to whom the public is also indebted for the mortgage-deed bearing the autograph of Shakspeare, which was discovered among the

papers of the Featherstonehaugh family, and presented to the late David Garrick, esquire, who bequeathed it to the British Museum.

A DAMNING PROOF.

On our arrival at Mr. Albany Wallis's he instantly produced the document so recently discovered, which he kept in his own hand, showing the signature of John Heminges to myself and Mr. Samuel Ireland. From the appearance of the instrument I was fully assured that there could not be a doubt as to its authenticity; and from the style of the hand-writing I also knew that the meanest capacity would have at once decided that the autograph affixed to the deed was not from the same hand as had subscribed that which was to the receipt, so totally different was the penmanship in every respect. Having examined the autograph with infinite attention, I quitted Mr. Ireland and Mr. Wallis, stating that I would see the supposed gentleman during the morning, and acquaint him with the whole event.

A BOLD EXPEDIENT.

From Norfolk Street I instantly repaired to chambers, retaining in my recollection the form of the original autograph of John Heminges which I had just inspected; and on my arrival there I committed the signature to paper in a form as similar to the original as my memory would enable me to give to it. After which I penned a receipt with the Shaksperian ink, and upon old paper, as for theatrical disbursements, forming the letters as similarly as possible to those in the name I had thus noted from recollection. With this document I hurried back to Mr. Albany Wallis, to whom I produced it with the following statement.

THE TALL AND SHORT JOHN HEMINGES.

Mr. A. Wallis, having compared the signature to my receipt, thus hastily formed, with the original autograph subscribed to the deed, was immediately struck with the similarity; when I gave the following rela-

tion: that on quitting him I had immediately hastened to the supposed gentleman, whom I very luckily found at home: that I expressed to him my astonishment at the discovery which had been made by Mr. Wallis, of a deed signed by John Heminges in a hand not resembling in the least the signature subscribed to the receipt: that upon witnessing my embarrassment he smiled, and, opening the drawer of his writing-table, drew from thence this second receipt, which was found correspondent to the signature on the deed, saying, "Take that to Mr. Wallis's, and see if it does not correspond with the hand-writing to his deed:" that my friend then further informed me, that, although not known to the world, there were two John Heminges in the time of Shakspeare; the one connected with Shakspeare and the Globe theatre, and the other being concerned for the Curtain theatre, which was another playhouse of the period of James I.: that the signatures of John Heminges to Mr. Wallis's deed and to the second receipt

thus given me by the gentleman, were the autographs of Shakspeare's friend; while the name affixed to the first receipt, which bore no resemblance to that on the deed, was the signature of John Heminges of the Curtain theatre, who was in some measure connected with Shakspeare and the Globe theatre. I also further added, that the gentleman acquainted me that it would appear, from further documents to be produced, that these two John Heminges were distinguished by the appellations of the *tall* John Heminges of the Globe and the *short* John Heminges of the Curtain theatres.

FABRICATION NEWLY FABRICATED.

However apt I might have been in carrying this signature in my recollection, and thus speedily producing a document at chambers to resemble the signature on Mr. Wallis's deed, I nevertheless, upon this further examination of the original autograph to the deed, did imagine that I could execute a fresh receipt that would more strikingly resemble the genuine sig-

nature of John Heminges. In consequence of which, having fully satisfied Mr. Wallis's mind at this trying juncture, I again hastened back to chambers; where I once more penned the receipt *verbatim* which I had so lately written: and bearing the recollection of the original signature more strongly in my mind, this duplicate fabrication proved a very strong resemblance to the authentic autograph on the deed: of course the first, which I had taken to Mr. Wallis, was destroyed, and the second, thus executed, was substituted in its stead: such being the method adopted in order to reconcile the difference between the name written with my left hand and that which appeared on the deed newly discovered by Mr. Albany Wallis of Norfolk Street.

REMARKABLE EXPEDITION.

It is a circumstance perhaps not unworthy remark, that the whole period of time taken up in first seeing the deed at Mr. Wallis's, hastening to chambers in or-

der to form the receipt, returning back to Mr. Wallis's with the receipt so fabricated and there framing and telling the story of the *tall* and *short* John Heminges, and finally the second return to chambers and re-execution (if I may be allowed the expression) of the receipt, did not actually occupy more than the space of one hour and a quarter. It will here be necessary to note, that Mr. Wallis's dwelling was at the bottom of Norfolk Street in the Strand, and the chambers to which I went were in New Inn. — This remarkable expedition was afterwards alleged as a convincing proof that the documents could not be other than original, as it was affirmed to be out of all human probability that such a succession of events could have taken place in so limited a space of time.

MORE AUTOGRAPHS OF JOHN HEMINGES.

After the production of this first receipt, to resemble the autograph affixed to Mr. Wallis's deed, I within a few days executed several others, and annexed a similar sig-

nature to some of the books which I produced, as a further proof that the documents were genuine.

In order, however, to give some idea of the opinions excited by this transaction, the following head, taken from Mr. Chalmers's Apology for the Believers (being a note in pages 18 and 19), will at once display his thoughts upon the subject.

MR. CHALMERS ON JOHN HEMINGES' SIGNATURE.

"I was present when the genuine deed of John Heminges, which is printed by Mr. Malone in the Inquiry (page 409), was produced in evidence; when there was produced at the same time a black-letter pamphlet having the name 'John Heminges' written at the top of the title-page, *so like as to be a perfect facsimile;* and at the bottom of the same page was written the name 'Wm. Shakspeare.' On the back of the title-page was written 'This was the book of John Heminges, which he gave unto me, Wm. Shakspeare.' Now had there been *an issue,* on an action at law, whether these were the signatures of Heminges and of Shakspeare, the genuine deed of Heminges would have been given in evidence, as the *certainty* from which the *uncertainty* would have been inferred. Here is legal or admissible proof: and the jury who had been sworn to try that issue 'according to the evidence given them,' must have delivered their verdict for the genuineness

of the signatures of Heminges and Shakspeare on the black-letter pamphlet before mentioned. This example proves how difficult it is to detect some forgeries by fair discussion. First, I believe that the deed of Heminges is genuine: Secondly, I believe that the signature of Heminges, on the black-letter pamphlet, was copied by the pen of a forger from the real signature on the deed; and that the signature of Shakspeare was copied by the same pen from fancy in some measure: yet am I of opinion that these forgeries cannot be detected by fair discussion."

MR. JAMES BOSWELL.

As the circumstances attending Mr. James Boswell's inspection of the manuscripts have been variously represented, and as I was present on that occasion, I shall state the facts as they really occurred.

On the arrival of Mr. Boswell, the papers were as usual placed before him: when he commenced his examination of them; and being satisfied as to their antiquity, as far as the external appearance would attest, he proceeded to examine the style of the language from the fair transcripts made from the disguised hand-writing. In this research Mr. Bos-

well continued for a considerable length of time, constantly speaking in favour of the internal as well as external proofs of the validity of the manuscripts. At length, finding himself rather thirsty, he requested a tumbler of warm brandy and water; which having nearly finished, he then redoubled his praises of the manuscripts; and at length, arising from his chair, he made use of the following expression: "Well; I shall now die contented, since I have lived to witness the present day." Mr. Boswell then, kneeling down before the volume containing a portion of the papers, continued, "I now kiss the invaluable relics of our bard: and thanks to God that I have lived to see them!" Having kissed the volume with every token of reverence, Mr. Boswell shortly after quitted Mr. Ireland's house: and although I believe he revisited the papers on some future occasions, yet that was the only time I was honoured with a sight of Mr. James Boswell.

STRING.

As old papers containing trivial accounts are usually bound together, it was deemed extraordinary that the numerous play-house receipts, which were written on small slips of paper, should be brought forward without being tied up. I was for some time anxious to obviate this objection, yet dreaded a discovery, by producing a thread or string of the present day, the texture and weaving of which I conceived might betray me: in consequence of this a considerable period elapsed ere I was able to compass my point, which was at length effected in the following manner.—

OLD TAPESTRY.

As Mr. S. Ireland very frequently made it a point to go to the house of lords in order to hear his majesty's speech and be present when he was robed, I happened to be in company with him on one of those occasions; when, having to pass

through some adjoining apartments, where many persons were waiting, and wherein we were also detained for a short time, I observed that the walls of the chambers were hung with very old and mutilated tapestry; when the idea suddenly struck me, that, by procuring a small remnant (knowing its antiquity), I might unravel the worsted and turn it to my immediate purposes. In consequence of this conjecture, I took up a loose piece (being about half the size of my hand) which was worn by time from the hangings of an apartment; and on returning to my Shakspearian occupation I drew out the worsted thread, which afterwards served me whensoever I had occasion to attach any of the receipts or other papers together.—The remains of the small piece of tapestry in question were vested in the hands of Albany Wallis, esq., on my disclosure of every fact appertaining to the suppositious papers.

PLAYHOUSE RECEIPTS.

As I heard it unceasingly stated that "the more bulky the papers were, the more probable would their authenticity appear," I began to consider what would be the best expedient to accomplish this end without much labour of the brain; for as my muse was not so very prolific as to "spin and weave" poetry as fast as it was required, I really began to loath the very idea of the manuscripts, which became to me an insufferable burden. At length the idea of playhouse receipts, or memorandums of theatrical expenditures, struck my fancy: in consequence of which, when my brain was not actually accordant with the temper of the Heliconian Nine, I had recourse to the drudgery of memorandum writing: by which means I added to the mass of the papers, and at the same time calmed the voice of reproof, which was so constantly lavished upon me for not producing .... that which

was not to be produced because I was not in the humour to compose it.

These documents were written on small slips of paper, and strung together by the dozen; being fastened with pieces of worsted unraveled from the tapestry.

MEMORANDUM FOR PLAYING BEFORE LORD LEICESTER.

The memorandum deemed the most curious I shall here notice: it was worded as under.

In the Yeare o Chryste
Forre oure Trouble inne goynge toe playe before the Lorde Leycesterre ats house ande oure greate expenneces thereuponne 19 Poundes
Receyvedde ofs Grace the Summe o 50 Poundes
Wm Shakspeare

From this receipt it was inferred that Shakspeare's company of players must have ranked foremost in that day; it having been selected, in preference to any other, by so renowned a favourite of queen Elizabeth as the lord Leicester.—It should be recollected that there were a variety of playhouses open at that time in the

city of London. In addition to which, the sum of fifty pounds was deemed a very exorbitant payment for that period.

SUBSTITUTING A BLANK FOR A DATE.

I here think it necessary to refer my readers to the head-line of the receipt above quoted. The blank after the word "Chryste" was originally filled up with a date; but so careless was I at that period as positively to have neglected making any reference to the period when lord Leicester died: in consequence of which the date originally standing there was two years subsequent to the demise of that nobleman. Having acquired this knowledge, I did not think it requisite to destroy the memorandum altogether, but satisfied myself with tearing off the corner of the receipt bearing the numericals; thus leaving it as a torn document, and making a *blank* where the erroneous date had originally stood; which must, if known, have at

once stamped the signet of invalidity on all the papers produced.

EXTRA PAYMENT TO MASTER LOWIN.

Upon a second memorandum relative to the playing before lord Leicester, I noted down a payment of two shillings extra, made by William Shakspeare "toe masterre Lowinne" for his "goode servyces ande welle playnge." And as upon many other of the playhouse receipts the names of the performers of that period were mentioned, the following head will account for my knowledge of them.

NAMES OF THE PLAYERS IN SHAKSPEARE'S DRAMAS.

Although the first and second editions in folio of Shakspeare's plays were in my possession, I had totally forgotten that on one of the first leaves of those editions are printed the names of the several performers in his dramas; and it was on this account that I remained for a considerable time without producing any manuscripts

relative to the players of that period. At length I accidentally heard the fact mentioned by some person inspecting the manuscripts, and in consequence referred immediately to the folios in question, whence I procured the information required, and which, without my knowledge, had been for so long a period within the scope of my attainment.

AGREEMENT BETWEEN SHAKSPEARE AND LOWIN THE PLAYER.

As it was generally allowed that law documents were the most convincing evidences of the validity of the manuscripts, the idea entered my mind of producing agreements as entered into between some of the players and William Shakspeare. In consequence of which I formed a deed as between Lowin and our bard, wherein the former agreed to perform during four years at the weekly salary of one pound and ten shillings: which payment was very exorbitant for that period; but as I had heard it surmised that Lowin was the

chief performer of his age, I consequently was not sparing in my allowance to him.

AGREEMENT BETWEEN SHAKSPEARE AND CONDELL THE PLAYER.

By this document Henry Condell the player covenanted to perform for the further space of three years, at the weekly salary of one pound and one shilling, to be paid every Saturday before twelve o'clock at night whether sick or well; it being covenanted "that he would play upon the stage for the said Wm. Shakspeare alle comedys ande tragedyes whiche he the said Wm. Shakspeare may at any tyme during the said terme cause to be played not written or composed by hymselfe butte are the writings or composytyons of others."

VALIDITY ATTACHED TO THE MANUSCRIPTS BY THE AGREEMENTS BETWEEN SHAKSPEARE, LOWIN, AND CONDELL.

These surreptitious agreements, purporting to be made between Shakspeare and

Lowin and Shakspeare and Condell, were written on parchment, in the same manner as the first document purporting to be between Shakspeare and Fraser, with this difference, that the latter two agreements were much better executed than was the first fabricated deed. With respect to the seals, I had also recourse to the same means of affixing them to the parchment slips appendent to the agreements as on the fabrication of the instrument between Shakspeare and Fraser.

As these documents were supposed to throw great light upon the theatrical affairs of that period, they were highly prized by the visitants at Mr. S. Ireland's mansion: in addition to which, as legal instruments, bearing the seals on which so great a stress had been laid in the case of Fraser's lease, they were deemed the most indisputable evidences of the originality of the whole mass of papers produced.

THE TANJORE MAHARAJA SERFOGI'S SARASWATI MAHAL.

A BROKEN SEAL.

As one very curious circumstance occurred respecting one of the seals (but to which of the documents affixed has now totally escaped my recollection), I shall here give a relation of the event precisely as it occurred. I have, under a previous head [*vide* "Seals" of the deed supposed to have been executed between Shakspeare and Fraser] stated that two kinds of wax were used in affixing the seals to the strips of parchment: that is to say, the front side, bearing the impression, was not melted; whereas the back part of the seal was formed of fresh melted wax. Now it unfortunately happened that some person inspecting one of the deeds suffered the same to fall from his hands upon Mr. S. Ireland's mahogany writing-desk: on which occasion, such was the brittle property of the wax, that the front side of one of the seals severed from the back part, which had held it to the strip of parchment appending from the deed; by which any shrewd

observer would have instantly recognised the difference in the colours of the wax.—However, this circumstance being communicated to me, I instantly advised the binding of the two parts together with black silk: and thus was the deed shown for a short time, without any scrutinising research being made of the mutilated parts of the seal; which might have been done by any person untwisting the silk that held the broken parts together.

CEMENTING A BROKEN SEAL.

As I dreaded lest some shrewd observer of the manuscripts should wish to examine with care this broken seal, I took an opportunity of informing Mr. S. Ireland that the supposed gentleman was desirous of inspecting that very document for an hour; and as nothing was denied to the mysterious donor of the papers, the instrument in question was consequently committed to my charge; with which I speedily hastened to chambers; and, having heated some fresh wax, firmly riveted the broken

parts together: after which, placing the black silk round the seal, I redelivered it to Mr. Ireland. Thus had any after visitant at Mr. Ireland's house been desirous of inspecting the broken seal, and had withdrawn the silk for that purpose, he would have found the parts adhering: in which case, whatsoever might have been the surprise, it would not have been tantamount to the conviction which must have flashed upon the mind of any shrewd observer on examining the parts of the seal disunited, which would at once have displayed the contrivance to which I had had recourse in affixing the seals to the deed.

PURCHASE OF A DRAWING IN BUTCHER ROW.

As I one day chanced to pass through Butcher Row, I saw a curious old drawing hanging up for sale. It was framed, and placed between two glasses, in order to display the back and front of the paper; on one side of which was the representation of an aged figure in the habit of a Dutchman, while on the reverse appeared

a young man gaily attired in an English dress of the period of James the First. As it suddenly struck me that the limning might be of utility to me in my Shaksperian employment, I made a purchase of it, and took it with me to chambers; where, taking out one of the glasses, I turned my purchase to the following account.

ALTERATIONS MADE IN THE DRAWING.

On the side bearing the representation of the old Dutchman I painted a pair of scales and a knife, in order that it might pass for the representation of Shylock in the Merchant of Venice; and on the reverse, whereon appeared the gaily dressed youth, I delineated, in one corner, the arms of Shakspeare; on the shield of which I from thoughtlessness reversed the spear, making the point directed to the right hand, whereas it really ought to have pointed to the left corner. On the opposite side I introduced the initials W S, with the titles of a few of Shakspeare's plays: and having before me a copy of Droeshout's

print, I altered the lineaments of the face of the figure represented, giving it as much as possible a resemblance to the print before me. Having made these alterations, I replaced the drawing in the frame, and, after fastening down the glass, presented it to Mr. Ireland.

BASSANIO AND SHYLOCK THE JEW.

The drawing of the old Dutchman was instantly construed to represent Shylock the Jew, although it was deemed rather extraordinary that the character should have been arrayed in the *costume* of a North-Hollander, which was really the case. The figure on the reverse (having the coat-of-arms of Shakspeare, the initial letters of his name, with the titles of some of his dramas, and bearing the faint resemblance which the altered physiognomy held to the print of Droeshout) was soon conceived to represent our bard in the character of Bassanio in the Merchant of Venice: and so far did conjecture go on this head, that it was gravely stated the drawing had in

all probability graced the green-room of the Globe theatre.

MR. H*WL*TT AND JOHN HOSKINS THE PAINTER.

In order to stamp the drawing as coeval with the time of Shakspeare, one Mr. H*wl*tt of the Temple, who was perfectly conversant with the mode of writing for centuries back, conceived that he had discovered, by the aid of magnifying glasses, in one corner, at the bottom of the drawing, faint traces of the name of John Hoskins, who, upon research, proved really to have been an artist of the period of James the First. For my own part, I must candidly confess, although my eyes are not of the weakest, that even with the aid of magnifiers I could never perceive any thing like a resemblance to the name in question; the whole originating, in my opinion, in the Indian ink of the back ground having assumed a deeper and blacker dye in some of the veins of the paper on which the design was executed than on others.

MAHARAJA SERFOGI'S SARAS

MR. MALONE'S STATEMENT.

This commentator, in page 243 of his ponderous Inquiry, speaking of the drawing in question, states as follows.—

"The originals of the two following coloured prints, one of which presents us with the portrait of an actor (Shakspeare, if you will) in the part of Bassanio in the Merchant of Venice, and the other with that of Shylock in the same play, I have not seen; and if I had seen them, I am not entitled, by any knowledge of the art, to decide upon their merit or authenticity. But by those who are perfect and indisputable judges in such matters, I have been informed, that, in spite of the process of *discolouration* by *tobacco-water,* and of *fumigation* by *smoke* and *brimstone,* which they appear to have undergone in that unknown repository in the country from whence all these curiosities have been issued, they are manifestly *washed drawings* of a *recent date,*" &c.

FUTILITY OF THE ABOVE STATEMENT.

Ever happy to contribute my mite in order to show the upstart pretensions of Mr. Malone as a critic, I shall now, by a simple statement, prove the fallacy of his assertion, and the ignorance of his friends; who, like himself, appear to have been

perfect and indisputable judges in such matters.

In the first place, the drawing in question, as purchased by me, was most *indisputably* as old as the period of James the First: secondly, its real antiquity precluded the necessity of giving to it the appearance of age; nor was it either discoloured with *tobacco-water* or fumigated with *smoke* and *brimstone*, as asserted by Mr. Malone's sapient friends: and, thirdly, with respect to the colouring, excepting in the trifling alterations made by me as before stated, the drawing, instead of being executed in *water colours*, were made in *body colours*. And with this statement I shall for the present dismiss the erudite commentator and his friends the limners.

SUPPOSED MEANING OF THE BASSANIO AND SHYLOCK DRAWING.

After the conclusions drawn from the scientific researches of Mr. Malone's friends, I fear that I shall be thought presump-

tuous in hazarding an opinion with regard to the drawing in question: I shall, notwithstanding, deliver my sentiments on the subject; which are simply as follow:

That the drawing was as ancient as the period when Shakspeare lived; and that it was meant to represent the contrast between a penurious money-getting father and the extravagance of his heir, who dissipated on dress and other fooleries those sums which had been amassed with so much industry and unremitting toil.

CERTIFICATE SUBSCRIBED BY STAUNCH BELIEVERS OF THE MANUSCRIPTS.

When the influx of persons to inspect the manuscripts was very great, Mr. Samuel Ireland, by the advice of several gentlemen who were most strenuous in their belief of the papers, drew out a kind of certificate, stating that the undersigned names were affixed by gentlemen who entertained no doubt whatsoever as to the validity of the Shaksperian produc-

tion, and that they voluntarily gave such public testimony of their ideas upon the subject. To this certificate several names were affixed by persons as conspicuous for their erudition as they were pertinacious in their opinions.

There is scarcely need to add, that, upon my confession of facts, I had no right to expect mercy from the above gentlemen, who were by that means held up to the taunts of Mr. Malone and his inveterate friends the critics.

RE-WRITING ONE OF SHAKSPEARE'S DRAMAS.

As it was generally deemed extraordinary that the productions of Shakspeare should be found so very unequal, and in particular that so much ribaldry should appear throughout his dramatic compositions, I determined on the expedient of re-writing, in the old hand, one of his most conspicuous plays, and making such alterations as I conceived appropriate. For some time, however, I delayed putting

my plan into execution, through an anxious desire to procure a copy of some play of Shakspeare's published during his life-time; for although I had in my possession the first folio edition of his works, dated in 1623, I was well aware that there existed much earlier copies of each separate drama in quarto.

THE QUARTO EDITION OF KING LEAR.

Having at length discovered that Mr. Samuel Ireland possessed a rare quarto copy of the play of King Lear, and being at liberty to resort to his library whenever I thought proper, I in consequence selected that drama for my purpose; and at convenient opportunities, when unobserved, I took the quarto play in question to the chambers, and there transcribed the same, making interpolations where I conceived they would answer my purpose.

I cannot but advert in this place to Mr. Malone's observation on the present topic, who states that the *rare quartoes* of any of

Shakspeare's plays were without doubt beyond the reach of the fabricator; who, he conceives, must have transcribed the Lear from the second edition in folio; whereas the manuscript of this play, as above stated, was really copied from one of those *rare editions* mentioned by Mr. Malone as out of the scope of the forger's procuring.

As a duplicate of this quarto, which bears date A. D. 1608, is doubtless among the *curiosa* of Mr. Malone, it is a matter of astonishment that he did not, with his usual pomposity, acquaint the public with that circumstance, as "Vanity, my cousin, is your blind side."

SPECIMEN OF ALTERATIONS MADE IN KING LEAR.

In the old quarto above mentioned, and in every subsequent edition of the play of King Lear, the following lines are spoken by Kent after the king's death:

"I have a journey, sir, shortly to go:
My master calls, and I must not say no."

As I did not conceive such a jingling and unmeaning couplet very appropriate to the occasion, I composed the following lines, which I was so arrogant as to believe would not injure the reputation of Shakspeare.—

Thanks, sir; but I go to that unknown land
That chains each pilgrim fast within its soil;
By living men most shunn'd, most dreaded.
Still my good master this same journey took:
He calls me; I am content, and straight obey:
Then farewell, world! the busy scene is done:
Kent liv'd most true, Kent dies most like a man.

CONCLUSIONS DRAWN FROM THE ALTERATIONS IN KING LEAR.

As I scrupulously avoided, in copying the play of Lear, the insertion of that ribaldry which is so frequently found in the compositions of our bard, it was generally conceived that my manuscript proved beyond doubt that Shakspeare was a much more finished writer than had ever before been imagined. It was also further suggested, that the numerous passages un-

worthy the sublime genius of Shakspeare which appear throughout all his dramas, were merely introduced in the representation, by the players of that period, and afterwards inserted in the playhouse copies of his productions; from which they were literally printed, and thus given to the world with the numerous alterations so foisted in by the performers to please the taste of the times.

THE TRANSCRIPT OF HAMLET.

Another of Shakspeare's dramas on which I ventured my trifling alterations, while copying it over in the old hand, was the popular tragedy of Hamlet. However, as I soon became weary of this plodding business, I only produced a few leaves of this second drama; whereas the Lear was completed within a few lines. The variations introduced by me in the pages of Hamlet thus executed, tended to strengthen the former opinions as to Shakspeare's correctness as a writer, while every thing appearing unworthy our bard was laid to the

charge of the players and printers of that period.

FIRST ACQUAINTANCE WITH MR. TALBOT.

I shall now advert to a very momentous period, when the whole Shaksperian fabric might instantly have been overturned, as I was then placed at the mercy of a gentleman who had it in his power to betray me.

Some months after my articles had commenced, I formed an acquaintance with Mr. Montague Talbot; who, like myself, was placed with a conveyancer, in order to his studying the law, but whose pursuits were much more calculated to fit him for the business of the theatre. As our meetings were very frequent, I became desirous of introducing Mr. Talbot to Mr. Samuel Ireland; which circumstance soon took place; when Mr. Talbot became a constant visitant in Norfolk Street.

MAHARAJA SERFO...

MR. TALBOT'S SHREWD SURMISE.

The close connexion which took place between Mr. Talbot and myself made that gentleman perfectly well acquainted with my research after antiquities, &c.: on which account I was frequently the object of his ridicule.

Some time after this friendship was formed, Mr. Talbot quitted London for a few weeks, and during his absence I embarked in the Shaksperian fabrication; for had I been subject, as usual, to the frequent calls of Mr. Talbot, I could never have followed up my plans with such perseverance and escaped detection. On the return of Mr. Talbot, he visited as usual in Norfolk Street; where he inspected the several documents at that time given in to Mr. S. Ireland. At our next meeting (being, as before stated, well acquainted with my pursuits, and having seen me imitate old hand-writings) he laughingly told me that he was well convinced the deed of Fraser and the other papers were

my own fabricating. To this charge I boldly pleaded the negative; though all my assurances were insufficient to convince him to the contrary of his own assertion.

MR. TALBOT'S DISCOVERY OF THE FORGERY.

For some days the business went on as usual, and I was particularly guarded as to the keeping a watchful eye upon every individual who approached the chambers; for I was well convinced that Mr. Talbot's perseverance would not be easily lulled, as he frequently came in upon me so suddenly that I was with infinite difficulty enabled to conceal from his observation the manuscript on which I then chanced to be engaged. One day, however, Mr. Talbot found means to elude my observation, by bending himself double, and in that position creeping beneath the window at which I was accustomed to write: thus unobserved he suddenly darted into the chambers, and ere I could find means to conceal the document whereon I was then

occupied, he arrested my arm, and by this stratagem became at once acquainted with the whole mystery. Fully aware that the anger of Mr. S. Ireland would be directed against me in full force were the fabrication discovered to him, I supplicated Mr. Talbot to pledge me his honour that he would never divulge the truth, unless I was desirous that the fact should be made public; to which request he acceded; and it is but justice in me to state, that he never in any one instance was led to divulge the fact, although in the sequel of the transaction he had almost sufficient ground to warrant such a procedure, from the disagreeable circumstances attendant on his having interfered for me in the progress of the fabrication.

MR. TALBOT'S MYSTERIOUS METHOD OF CORRESPONDING.

After some time had elapsed from Mr. Talbot's becoming acquainted with the fact, his attachment to theatrical pursuits prompted him to relinquish the study of

the law, and he in consequence determined on visiting Dublin; whither he at length set out, after a promise on my part that I would regularly correspond with him, and give a detail of the various documents which I should fabricate during his absence. After two letters had passed between us, wherein I mentioned without disguise every composition in which I was engaged, Mr. Talbot recommended that we should in future correspond in a manner that would be unintelligible to any other person but ourselves, should any letter be by chance mislaid or miscarry. The *talisman* adopted on this occasion was a sheet of paper having several pieces cut from different parts of it; which, when desirous of writing, was placed on a sheet of post paper; when the communication to be made was written on the parts of the post paper appearing through the holes so made in the mutilated sheet; after which the blanks left were filled up with any words, so as to render the whole unintelligible. Mr. Talbot and myself, having each

[illegible] of paper cut precisely the same, upon receipt of [illegible] letter had only to place the same upon the corr[illegible]dence received, when that part of the epistle which it was intended should be understood became instantly apparent, while the farrago of nonsense with which the remainder of the lines was filled up was of course hidden from observation, leaving the sense only of the letter apparent to the eye, as before stated.

MR. TALBOT'S RETURN FROM IRELAND.

Having so much penmanship to execute, I became less frequent in addressing Mr. Talbot; so that a small portion of the play of Vortigern and Rowena was composed ere Mr. Talbot heard that I had embarked in any such daring enterprise. Upon this occasion Mr. Talbot (having heard it reported in Dublin that such a drama was coming forward, which had been discovered with the other Shaksperian manuscripts) dispatched a letter to me indicatory of his astonishment that I

should not have confided the [illegible] to him; which also con[illegible] with informing me th[illegible] was then on the very eve of quitting Dublin, on his return to this country; and, indeed, scarcely were ten days elapsed from the receipt of this epistle ere Mr. Talbot in person presented himself to me; when I made every apology for my remissness in not having written, stating, in extenuation of my conduct (what was no other than fact), that I was literally so harassed in mind, from the various compositions in which I had embarked, as to be wholly unmindful of every other consideration: and indeed, on Mr. Talbot's inspection of the papers at Mr. Ireland's house, even he himself was astonished at the numerous manuscripts produced, and the variety of the documents which I had composed during his absence.

VOLUNTARY OFFER OF MR. TALBOT'S LITERARY ABILITIES.

As Mr. Talbot was a friend of the Muses, he became anxious to add a portion of his

own composition in the course of the production of the Vortigern; and as his continuance in London was but for a few days, I promised that I would send to him, when at Dublin, the plan of some of the scenes of the Vortigern, leaving the language to himself; which, when remitted to me, I was to copy in the disguised hand upon the old paper.—Having entered into this agreement, Mr. Talbot shortly after quitted London for Dublin; but I refrained from dispatching such plans of the scenes as promised, from a conviction that the style of what should be remitted to me by Mr. Talbot would differ from my own most materially: in addition to which, as Mr. Talbot had not been so accustomed to the old method of composition as myself, I thought the introduction of two such opposite styles of writing must tend to a discovery of the fabrication of that drama: and under these assurances, seconded by a degree of vanity which prompted me to aspire solely to the production of the piece, I did not consult

Mr. Talbot on the subject, but completed the play without any aid whatsoever on his part.

PRIVATE INTERVIEW WITH MR. TALBOT, AND OUR AGREEMENT, &c.

During Mr. Talbot's short continuance in London, as various doubts were then hazarded in opposition to the validity of the manuscripts, I prevailed upon that gentleman to join me in the story related: in consequence of which it was agreed between us, that he should forward a letter to Mr. Samuel Ireland, after his departure from London, acquainting him that "he was likewise present with me on the discovery of the papers." And it was also settled between us, that the name of the supposed donor of the manuscripts should be stated in future as commencing with the letter H.—At this private interview, when the above agreement took place, we also mutually destroyed every letter which had previously passed between us; so that no one document then existed to prove the

fact respecting the fabrication of the papers by myself. And immediately after this meeting, Mr. M. Talbot again set out for Dublin.

Under the foregoing heads is contained every statement with regard to Mr. Montague Talbot's discovery of the transaction and his subsequent connexion with me in the business: and it is but justice in me to remark, in the present instance, that every step thus taken by Mr. Talbot was only done at my most earnest request, in order that he might in some measure extricate me from the labyrinth of perplexity wherein I had so innocently involved myself.

PRELUDE TO A PROOF.

After the completion of the play of Vortigern and Rowena, without the interference of Mr. Talbot, notwithstanding his request made to that effect previous to his departure from London [see the head "Voluntary offer of Mr. Talbot's literary abilities," page 126], a letter came to me from Ireland, part of which I have here

deemed it *necessary* to *insert*, as it not only goes to prove the statement as to our mutual agreement respecting H previous to his departure, but also tends to establish the veracity of my assertion; as will be explained under the article which follows the ensuing quotation.

QUOTATION FROM MR. M. TALBOT'S LETTER.

"Dear friend, 6th Jan., 1796.

"It is now a month, I believe, since I wrote to your father a particular account of the discovery of Vortigern, with every thing that has passed before and since the fortunate finding it at H's. I wrote by the same post to yourself: begged you to show H the letter I wrote your father, and keep a copy yourself. Now I think it rather hard I am not favoured with an answer, and that my particular request is not complied with. I asked for a copy of Vortigern and Rowena, as curtailed for representation: now, although you neglect me so much as to withhold the copy of the play, which you know when in London I had not time to read, and which you may naturally suppose I would wish to know almost as I would all *Shakspeare's* works, yet mark how I am situated, and then you will not blame me for renewing my request: Every one knows here the concern I have with Vortigern and Rowena, and every one asks for the particulars: I then show the copy of the letter sent your father; but when I am asked as to the play and its merits, plot, beauties, &c., *I know nothing.*

It is much wondered at that I can give no account of its coming out. Some ask me if I have not in my possession any scrap of the writings of Shakspeare. So I request you will send me some bill, receipt, or letter of his," &c.

PROOFS THAT I ALONE AM THE AUTHOR OF THE MANUSCRIPTS.

As the whole superstructure of the Shaksperian manuscripts was reared on the basis of falsehood, and as some opinions have erroneously gone abroad that I was not the *sole writer* of the papers, I have consequently sought every means to establish this position, "that, however a man may once act erroneously, he may at some subsequent period become convinced of his error, and seek to make atonement."

I have under this conviction made the foregoing quotation, in order to prove that I alone was concerned in the composition of the manuscripts. Not that I am desirous of arrogating any merit to myself from the language contained in the manuscripts, but that I wish to establish my veracity in this instance.

Mr. Talbot, in the foregoing quotation from his letter, alludes to his having agreed with me as to his connexion with the manuscripts. He also mentions the supposed donor, under the letter *H:* and in speaking of the play of Vortigern, he confesses that he knows nothing of its "*merits, plot, beauties*, &c.:" which would not have proved the case had Mr. Talbot aided me in the completion of the play.

I have only to add, that I am heartily sorry that Mr. Talbot's kindness should have led him to sanction the business, and in any way connect his name with an affair which has involved its author in so much difficulty: and with this apology I shall conclude the present statement.

FIRST IDEA OF THE PLAY OF VORTIGERN AND ROWENA.

When the idea of writing a play first took possession of my mind, I continued for some days undecided as to the subject most appropriate to the purpose; when a large drawing, executed by Mr. S. Ireland

(being a copy from a design of Mortimer's) representing Rowena in the act of presenting wine to Vortigern, and which hung over the chimneypiece in Mr. Ireland's study, suddenly attracted my attention. In consequence, when alone I took down Mr. Ireland's edition of Holinshed's Chronicle, and referred to the story of Vortigern as related by that historian; when, conceiving it apt to my purpose, I immediately planned the outline of the play; and with my usual impetuosity made known to Mr. Ireland the discovery of such a piece, before a single line was really executed. In consequence of which I was unceasingly tormented for the manuscript; which I brought forward in small portions, as I found time to compose it, in my own hand-writing, pretending to have copied it from the original: and I believe I may with safety aver, that the play, though procrastinated in the delivery, did not actually occupy more than two months' time in the composing; notwithstanding

the inconveniences I had to surmount from Mr. Ireland's unceasing applications, from the questionings of the numerous persons who inspected the papers, and the difficulty I found in snatching opportunities to proceed with the manuscript.

It is extraordinary to observe how willingly persons will blind themselves on any point interesting to their feelings. When it was known that a play on the subject of Vortigern was coming forward, every person who inspected the manuscripts admired the strange coincidence of Mr. Ireland's having so long possessed a drawing on the very subject of that drama; yet do I not recollect, even in one instance, that the drawing in question excited the smallest suspicion of the fact above stated, which was unquestionably more consonant with probability.

A considerable time after the production of this play, some believer in the papers desired Mr. Ireland to refer to Milton's works; wherein it appears that he has

mentioned the story of Vortigern and Rowena, with some others, as very appropriate for the drama.

Thus have I precisely stated every fact, as to the first idea of the piece having taken possession of my mind. I therefore need scarcely add, that Milton's note upon the subject was totally unknown to me till after the completion of the play as before mentioned, when that fact was stated to me by Mr. S. Ireland.

DOUBTS IN THE COMPOSITION OF VORTIGERN.

Being considerably under the age of eighteen when I wrote the play of Vortigern, the following fact will not appear singular. I was really so unacquainted with the proper length of a drama as to be compelled to count the number of lines in one of Shakspeare's plays, and on that standard to frame the Vortigern; and the play I had chosen happening to be uncommonly long, mine consequently became so: when completed, it contained, to the best of my recollection, two thousand

eight hundred lines and upwards. Upon observing this, Mr. Sh*r*d*n remarked, that "the purchase of the play was at any rate a good one, as there were two plays and a half, instead of one." I believe that fourteen hundred lines are quite sufficient for a regular drama of the present day.

MR. H*RR*S OF COVENT GARDEN THEATRE.

When it was known that a play had been found among the supposed Shaksperian relics, Mr. H*rr*s of Covent Garden theatre, ever anxious for the advancement of the interests of that house, and naturally conceiving, that, if well received by a British audience, a newly discovered play of Shakspeare's must prove a source of great profit to the theatre, dispatched Mr. W*ll*ce (father of the then actress of that name) with a *carte blanche*, in order that Mr. Ireland might state his terms: yet the long acquaintance of our family with certain persons connected with the other theatre, and the promise made to them that the Vortigern should be performed on that stage (not-

withstanding the dilatory conduct of the managers of that house as to the completion of the business), prompted Mr. Ireland to reject the very handsome proposition made by Mr. H*rr*s: at whose theatre had the piece been represented I have heard it generally affirmed that it would have succeeded; for at that house there was no jarring interest; and whether the papers were accredited or not by Messrs. Steevens and Malone was nothing to the purpose—*every performer* would THERE *have done his duty,* and exerted himself for the benefit of his employers. How far such a line of conduct was pursued at Drury Lane, is too generally known for me to comment upon in the present instance.

MR. SH*R*D*N'S OPINION OF SHAKSPEARE.

When it was agreed that Vortigern and Rowena should be represented at Drury Lane theatre, Mr. S. Ireland had very frequent conversations with Mr. Sh*r*d*n respecting the transcendent genius of our

bard; and one day in particular, after Mr. S. Ireland had been as usual lavish in his encomiums, Mr. Sh*r*d*n remarked, that, however high Shakspeare might stand in the estimation of the public in general, he did not for his part regard him as a poet in that exalted light, although he allowed the brilliancy of his ideas, and the penetration of his mind.

OPINIONS ON VORTIGERN.

Previous to the agreement's being signed respecting Vortigern and Rowena with the managers of Drury Lane theatre, Messrs. Sh*r*d*n and R*ch*rds*n waited upon Mr. Ireland, to inspect the fair copy of the play, which had been made from the manuscript as produced in the disguised hand. After having perused several pages, Mr. Sh*r*d*n came to one line which was not strictly poetic; upon which, turning to Mr. Ireland, he remarked—"This is rather strange; for though you are acquainted with my opinion as to Shakspeare, yet, be it as it may, he certainly always wrote

poetry."—Having perused a few pages further, Mr. Sh*r*d*n again paused, and, laying down the manuscript, spoke to the following effect: "There are certainly some bold ideas, but they are crude and undigested. It is very odd: one would be led to think that Shakspeare must have been very young when he wrote the play. As to the doubting whether it be really his or not, who can possibly look at the papers, and not believe them ancient?"

AGREEMENT FOR THE PLAY OF VORTIGERN.

After the most unaccountable procrastination, the terms of the deed, as to the purchase of the Vortigern by Mr. Sh*r*-d*n, were agreed upon, and the papers drawn up by Mr. Albany Wallis of Norfolk Street; Mr. S. Ireland being made trustee for me, as I was then under age. The terms of the agreement were, that Mr. Sh*r*d*n should pay down three hundred pounds, and that the profits of the performance for the first sixty nights [that I believe to have been the number] should

be equally divided between Mr. Samuel Ireland and Mr. Sh*r*d*n, after deducting the necessary expenses of the theatre; which sum was also specified, but has now entirely escaped my memory.

The three hundred pounds was paid in notes of hand, at short dates, drawn upon Mr. H*mm*rsly the banker, out of which I received sixty pounds. I have thought it necessary to mention this circumstance, that the charge of avarice may not be attributed to me; such an idea having never once entered my mind during the whole period I was occupied in the fabrication of the papers: and indeed I must add, it would have been diametrically opposite to the established laws of nature, had I at the age of seventeen years and three quarters regularly entered upon such a scheme for the express purpose of amassing money: and I will boldly challenge any person to come forward and accuse me, in any one instance, of a desire of securing to myself any portion of the profits which might be derived from the manuscripts.

MALONE'S HANDBILL.

The following instance is in itself sufficient to evince the undue influence used by Mr. Malone, in order to establish his own opinions, and prejudice the public mind against the manuscripts.

For some weeks previous to the performance of the play of Vortigern, Mr. Malone had daily given intimation that his *Inquiry* into the Validity of the Papers attributed to Shakspeare was on the eve of publication. The volume, however, did not appear until after the representation of the piece. In order, therefore, that Mr. Malone might not be backward on this occasion, it was stated in the course of the day that a handbill was to be delivered at the several avenues leading to Drury Lane theatre, which was to contain an affirmation, that Mr. Malone, in his work, would prove the whole to be a rank forgery; and that, consequently, he had issued the said paper in order to caution persons against the fraud, and lead them to judge of the play in its proper light. In consequence

of this intelligence, Mr. S. Ireland caused a handbill to be printed, wherein he stated his knowledge of the modes that were adopted by Mr. Malone in opposition to the play; and requested that all persons who should attend the representation of the piece would lay aside any prejudices that might arise in consequence of such invidious attacks, and suffer the piece to speak for itself. Such I know to have been the purport of Mr. Ireland's printed paper; although at present I am unable to find out one of the handbills in question, the contents of which should have otherwise met the eye of the public.

OVERFLOW OF DRURY LANE THEATRE.

It is almost impossible to convey an adequate idea of the influx of persons who came to behold the representation of Vortigern. Every seat in the boxes had been previously taken; and so eager were the public to witness the fate of the play, that numerous persons paid the box prices, not being able to pass the pit door with sufficient expedition: after which, finding all

the places in the boxes in keeping for the various parties who had bespoken them for weeks previous, they dropped down from the lower tier of boxes into the pit, in order to procure seats.

THE DRAMATIS PERSONÆ OF VORTIGERN.

The names of the characters introduced in the play of Vortigern were as follow:

CONSTANTIUS, *personated by*	Mr. Bensley.
AURELIUS	Mr. Barrymore.
UTER	Mr. Caulfield.
VORTIGERN	Mr. Kemble.
WORTIMERUS	Mr. Whitfield.
CATAGRINUS	Mr. Trueman.
PASCENTIUS	Mr. C. Kemble.
HENGIST	Mr. Benson.
HORSUS	Mr. Phillimore.
Fool	Mr. King.
Servant	Master De Camp.
Page	Master Gregson.
EDMUNDA	Mrs. Powell.
FLAVIA	Mrs. Jordan.
ROWENA	Miss Miller.
Attendants on EDMUNDA . .	Miss Leake. Miss Tidswell. Miss Heard.

Barons, Officers, Guards, &c.

MR. IRELAND'S BOX.

The box occupied by Mr. Samuel Ireland and his friends was in the centre of the house. It was even stated, though (I imagine) erroneously, that on Mr. Ireland's appearance in the theatre there was some indication of applause from different parts of the house. I did not enter the theatre till a very short period previous to the rising of the curtain; and the box being so very conspicuous, I soon retired from observation behind the scenes; where I continued the greater part of the time of representation, engaged in conversation with Mrs. Jordan.

PROLOGUE TO VORTIGERN.

WRITTEN BY SIR JAMES BLAND BURGESS, BART.

SPOKEN BY MR. WHITFIELD.

No common cause your verdict now demands:
Before the court immortal Shakspeare stands;
That mighty master of the human soul,
Who rules the passions, and with strong controul
Through ev'ry turning of the changeful heart
Directs his course sublime and leads his powerful art.

When on his birth propitious Nature smil'd,
And hung transported o'er her fav'rite child;
While on his head her choicest gifts she show'rd,
And o'er his mind her inspiration pour'd;
" Proceed!" she cried; " the high decree fulfil!
" 'Tis thine to rule with magic sway the will;
" On Fancy's wing to stretch o'er boundless space,
" And all creation's varied works to trace:
" 'Tis thine each flitting phantom to pursue,
" Each hidden pow'r of verse to bring to view;
" To shed o'er British taste celestial day,
" And reign o'er genius with unrival'd sway.".

Such was the high behest.—The sacred choice
Long has been sanction'd by your candid voice.
The favour'd relics of your Shakspeare's hand
Unrival'd and inimitable stand.
If hope of fame some modern bards has led
To try the path where Shakspeare wont to tread,
If with presumptuous wing they dar'd aspire
To catch some portion of his sacred fire,
Your critic powers the vain attempt repell'd;
The flimsy vapour, by your breath dispell'd,
Expos'd the trembling culprit to your sight,
While Shakspeare's radiance shone with doubled light.

From deep oblivion snatch'd, this play appears:
It claims respect, since Shakspeare's name it bears;
That name, the source of wonder and delight,
To a fair hearing has at least a right.
We ask no more. With you the judgement lies:
No forgeries escape your piercing eyes!

Unbiass'd, then, pronounce your dread decree,
Alike from prejudice or favour free.
If, the fierce ordeal pass'd, you chance to find
Rich sterling ore, though rude and unrefin'd,
Stamp it your own, assert your poet's fame,
And add fresh wreaths to Shakspeare's honour'd name.

MRS. JORDAN'S SONG.

As the native sweetness of Mrs. Jordan's voice had so invariably excited public approbation, I conceived that by writing a ditty expressly for that lady I should in a great measure benefit the piece when represented. In consequence of this supposition, I composed the annexed verses, which were very ably set to music by William Linley, esq., and were received with unbounded plaudits, when sung by the inimitable actress above mentioned, on the night of the representation of the play.

I should here acquaint the reader, in order to account for the statement above *(that the ditty was expressly composed for Mrs. Jordan)*, that every leading character introduced in the Vortigern was positively

written for some certain performer: and it was for the same reason that I caused Mrs. Jordan to assume the male attire, as she was so universally allowed to become the male *costume.*

She sung, while from her eye ran down
The silv'ry drop of sorrow:
From Grief she stole away the crown;
Sweet patience too did borrow.
Pensive she sat,
While Fortune frown'd,
And smiling woo'd sad Melancholy.

Keen Anguish fain would turn her heart,
And sour her gentle mind;
But Charity still kept her part,
And meekness to her soul did bind.
She bow'd, content,
Heav'd forth one sigh,
Sang, wept, then turn'd to Melancholy.

Careless her locks around her hung,
And strove to catch each dewy tear;
The plaintive bird in pity sung,
And breath'd his sorrow in her ear:
Amaz'd, she look'd,
And thank'd his care,
Then sank once more to Melancholy.

MISS LEAKE'S SONG.

The following verse was written for the part of Edmunda, the wife of Vortigern; supposed to be an effusion during her mental derangement, and alluding to her children, who had been compelled to fly their father's palace on account of his barbarity. The part of the queen being, however, sustained by Mrs. Powell, who has never appeared in the vocal line, the verse was sung by Miss Leake (who performed the part of an attendant), at the request of her royal mistress.

The music of this stanza was also composed by W. Linley, esq., and received that tribute of praise to which its plaintive melody so justly entitled it.

Last Whitsuntide they brought me
   Roses and lilies fair;
Violets too they gave me,
   To bind my auburn hair:
But then my face look'd smiling,
   'Cause that my babes were near.
Now yon stinging nettle bring:
   'Twill better suit this tear!

PRESENTIMENT.

There is something so appalling in the conviction that a man does not stand upon the basis of truth, that he shrinks with terror when circumstances appear most favourable to his wishes. On the important night which was to seal the fate of my long-expected Vortigern and Rowena, I spent the greater part of the time of its representation in the green-room of the theatre; where I conversed for the most part with Mrs. Jordan; who, at the commencement of the third act (at which period not a dissenting voice had been heard) congratulated me on the success of the piece, and gave it as her opinion that it would succeed. I am by no means superstitious, but a presentiment had taken possession of my mind (originating in the knowledge of the deception which characterised the whole production), which led me to augur very differently: and I then returned for answer, "That, notwithstanding appearances were auspicious to

the success of the play, I felt a full conviction that it would not be a second time represented." How far my conjecture proved just, was fully demonstrated by the event of that night's representation.

EPILOGUE TO VORTIGERN.

WRITTEN BY THE LATE ROBERT MERRY, ESQ.

SPOKEN BY MRS. JORDAN.

Ye solemn critics, wheresoe'er you're seated,
To grant a favour may you be entreated?
For which I'll pay you proper adoration,
And strive to please you—that is my vocation.
Then do not frown, but give due share of praise,
Nor rend from Shakspeare's tomb the sacred bays,
The scatter'd flow'rs he left, benignly save:
Posthumous flow'rs; the garland of the grave!

What though he liv'd two hundred years ago,
He knew you very well, as I will show:
His pencil sketch'd you, and that seldom errs:
You're all, whate'er you think, his characters.
How!—do you doubt it? Cast your eyes around:
In every corner of this house they're found.
Observe the jolly grazier in the pit:
Why, he is Falstaff, fat and full of wit:
In fun and feasting places his delight,
And with his Dolly emulates the knight.
Look at that youth, whose countenance of woe
Denotes a tender-hearted Romeo:

He only wishes, though he dare not speak,
To be a glove to touch his Juliet's cheek:
While she from yonder terrace smiles serene,
And longs with him to play the garden scene.
But—oh, I tremble now!—there sits a man,
Ragged and rough; a very Caliban!
He growls out his displeasure. 'Tis a shame:
Do, dear Miranda, make the monster tame.
And, you my pretty Beatrice, don't fret
Your Benedick is fond of a coquette;
For though he vows he'll think no more about you,
He means to marry:—he can't live without you.
Kind faithful Imogens are here to charm us;
Mad Edgars, ancient Pistols, to alarm us;
And Hotspurs too, who seek the glorious boon
"To pluck bright honour from the pale-fac'd moon."
Besides, we have our Touchstones, Shylocks dire,
Iagos false, and many a "Shallow" squire:
Nay, there are ladies who in their own houses
Are Desdemonas, plagued with jealous spouses.

'Tis true there is some change, I must confess,
Since Shakspeare's time; at least in point of dress:
The ruffs are gone, and the long female waist
Yields to the Grecian more voluptuous taste;
While circling beads the copious tresses bind,
And the bare neck spreads beautiful behind.
Our senators and peers no longer go,
Like men in armour, glitt'ring in a row;
But, for the cloak and pointed beard, we note
The close-cropt head and little short great-coat.
Yet is the modern Briton still the same:
Eager to cherish and averse to blame;

Foe to deception; ready to defend;
A kind protector and a gen'rous friend.

OPPOSITIONS TO THE PLAY OF VORTIGERN.

The following are the obstacles which were purposely opposed to the final success of the play of Vortigern.

MR. DIGNUM.

I do not mean to detract from the merits of Mr. Dignum as a vocal performer; but the idea of beholding that gentleman strut forth in tragedy is quite sufficient to excite risibility even in Melpomene herself. I have no doubt that that circumstance was justly appreciated by the acting manager of the day, who in consequence suffered Mr. Dignum to '*bellow on**;' which he did so effectually, by his guttural pronunciation, as to set the whole house in a convulsive peal of laughter—a circumstance highly conducive to the success of a tragedy!!

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* In a particular speech Mr. Dignum had to order the sounding of the trumpets; the words being,

---------- let them bellow on!

MR. PHILLIMORE.

The late facetious Mr. Phillimore, of *large-nosed* memory, was also placed by the manager in a prominent point of view, having, if I recollect aright, to perform the part of the Saxon general Horsus, whom I unfortunately killed in combat. That gentleman, on receiving the deadly wound (which proved, indeed, a *deadly blow* to my play), either from prior tuition or chance (I will not pretend to decide which) so placed his unfortunate carcass that on the falling of the drop-curtain he was literally divided between the audience and his brethren of the sock and buskin; his legs, &c., being towards the spectators, and his head, &c., inside the curtain, which concealed them from observation. This, however, was not the only calamity: for as the wooden roller at the bottom of the curtain was rather ponderous, Mr. Phillimore groaned beneath the unwelcome burden; and finding his brethren somewhat dilatory in extricating him, he adopted

the more natural expedient of extricating himself; which, for a *dead man*, was something in the style of Mr. Bannister, jun., in the Critic, who tells Mr. Puff "that he cannot stay there *dying* all day."

Mr. Phillimore's acceptation of the part was, however, very appropriate, and highly gratifying to an audience that came for the express purpose of using their pocket-handkerchiefs in the *affetuoso*, instead of wiping away the drops which overflowed from excess of laughter.

CH*RL*S ST*RT, ESQ., M.P.

I had almost forgot to mention the conduct of Ch*rl*s St*rt, esq., M.P., who was seated in a private box even with the stage, and who was so exasperated at the pointed ill conduct and buffoonery of Mr. Phillimore, as to make several attempts to seize him by the robe; in which case that gentleman might have had to encounter even a worse antagonist than was allotted to him in my play.

QUOTATION FROM MR. IRELAND'S PREFACE TO THE PLAY OF VORTIGERN.

"No man who recollects what was said and written in the public prints concerning this piece on the eve of its representation, and the ludicrous manner in which the principal character was sustained, can deny that the editor has a right to complain of the most illiberal and injurious treatment.

"Every undue stratagem, and every mean and petty artifice, was resorted to, within doors and without, to prejudice the public mind; and one more deeply interested than had then or has yet appeared, though a professed trader on the subject of Shakspeare, on the day before the representation, under the title of An Inquiry into the Authenticity of certain Miscellaneous Papers, *&c.*, with this view, and the further expectation of helping off a few copies, sent into the world a volume long before promised, and long since forgotten.

"This mass of dulness and selfconceit, consisting of about four hundred and thirty pages, established nothing; and was built on principles—if it is not an abuse to apply to such trash a term so respectable—that could not possibly establish any thing. In every one of the instances which, with such a weak and overweaning confidence he so very idly brought forward, he has been exposed; and in some of them has been himself the author of his own childishness, incapacity, and ignorance.

"In this state it was delivered to the theatre, with a

request, or rather entreaty, that all further alteration deemed necessary should be made by the acting manager or any other person competent to the business. To this request he received the following official answer from Mr. Kemble:—'That the play would be acted faithfully from the copy sent to the theatre.' And it was accordingly acted literally from the manuscript delivered to the house. This conduct was, as the editor believes, unprecedented in the management of a theatre; and must warrant him in concluding, that, in the judgement of the acting manager, the play wanted no aid or alteration."

MR. KEMBLE.

The conduct of this gentleman was too obvious to the whole audience to need much comment: I must, however, remark, that the particular line on which Mr. Kemble laid such a peculiar stress was in my humble opinion the *watchword* agreed upon by the Malone faction for the general howl. The speech alluded to ran as follows; the line in Italics being that so particularly noticed by Mr. Kemble.—

Time was, alas! I needed not this spur:
But here's a secret and a stinging thorn,

That wounds my troubled nerves.—O conscience, conscience!
When thou didst cry, I strove to stop thy mouth,
By boldly thrusting on thee dire Ambition.
Then I did think myself indeed a god!
But I was sore deceiv'd: for as I pass'd,
And travers'd in proud triumph the basse court,
There I saw Death clad in most hideous colours.
A sight it was that did appal my soul,
Yea curdled thick this mass of blood within me.
Full fifty breathless bodies struck my sight;
And some with gaping mouths did seem to mock me;
Whilst others, smiling in cold death itself,
Scoffingly bade me look on that, which soon
Would wrench from off my brow this sacred crown,
And make me too a subject like themselves.
Subject!—to whom?—to thee, O sov'reign Death!
Who hast for thy domain this world immense.
Churchyards and charnel-houses are thy haunts,
And hospitals thy sumptuous palaces.
And when thou wouldst be merry, thou dost choose
The gaudy chamber of a dying king.
O then thou dost ope wide thy hideous jaws,
And with rude laughter and fantastic tricks
Thou clapp'st thy rattling fingers to thy sides.
And when this solemn mockery is o'er,
With icy hand thou tak'st him by the feet,
And upward, so, till thou dost reach the heart,
And wrap him in the cloak of 'lasting night.

No sooner was the above line uttered in the most sepulchral tone of voice possible,

MAHARAJA SERFOGI'S SAR

and accompanied with that peculiar emphasis which on a subsequent occasion so justly rendered Mr. Kemble the object of criticism (*viz.*, on the first representation of Mr. Coleman's Iron Chest), than the most discordant howl echoed from the pit that ever assailed the organs of hearing. After the lapse of ten minutes, the clamour subsided; when Mr. Kemble, having again obtained a hearing, instead of proceeding with the speech at the ensuing line, very politely, and in order to amuse the audience still more, redelivered the very line above quoted with even more solemn grimace than he had in the first instance displayed.—This remark is not meant as invidious: foes as well as friends to the manuscripts allowed it; and, according to the trite adage, "what is by all allowed, must be true."

MR. SH*R*D*N'S DISAPPROBATION OF MR. KEMBLE'S CONDUCT.

As in case the play of Vortigern had met with success a very considerable pro-

fit must have accrued to the managers, Mr. Sh*r*d*n was much displeased at the conduct of the gentleman mentioned in the preceding paragraph, and, if I mistake not, gave vent to his feelings in nearly the following terms: that "he" (Mr. Sh*r*d*n) "had nothing to do with the private piques and animosities of Mr. Kemble, or whether he approved of the manuscripts or not: that he regarded that gentleman merely as a servant of the theatre; and that it was consequently his duty to have exerted himself to the utmost for the benefit of his employers."

APATHY.

When the fate of Vortigern was decided, I returned, in company with Mr. S. Ireland, to Norfolk Street, where a few gentlemen shortly after arrived to converse on the events of the evening. As I found it more than probable that they would remain in conversation till a late hour, I retired to bed, more easy in my mind than I had been for a great length of time,

as the load was removed which had oppressed me.

I that night slept most profoundly, and even awoke in the morning much later than usual: and, on descending to breakfast, I was upbraided for my want of feeling on so momentous an occasion; and the general wonder was, how I could possibly sleep at all after such an event, which had deprived me of so great an emolument as would have accrued in case the play had been attended with success.

RECEIPT FOR THE PLAY OF VORTIGERN.

On applying to the treasurer of Drury Lane theatre, the morning after the fate of the Vortigern had been decided, Mr. S. Ireland was given to understand that there were two hundred and six pounds in the treasury, after the payment of all expenses: consequently the division of that sum took place between the manager and Mr. S. Ireland, who received one hundred and three pounds; out of which I had the sum of thirty pounds, which, together with

the sixty pounds received out of the three hundred pounds paid by Mr. Hammersly, conformably to the agreement on the delivery of the manuscript of Vortigern and Rowena, made me a gainer of ninety pounds by the papers: and if I ever received one farthing in addition, let those who can controvert this statement boldly challenge me as to the fact, and establish, if possible, the falsehood of my position.

MRS. POWELL.

In the play of Vortigern, Mrs. Powell accepted the part of Edmunda (which had been previously offered to, but *rejected by, Mrs. Siddons, on account of a cold under which she laboured)*. The discrimination of the character evinced by Mrs. Powell called forth the reiterated peals of applause she so justly merited for her generous endeavours on the night of representation: and on its being withdrawn, she expressed herself to Mr. Samuel Ireland with real sorrow; stating, that, from *theatrical cabal,* it was so very seldom she had a part

allotted to her wherein she might exert herself to effect, that on the occasion of her flattering reception in the part of Edmunda, she had hoped to experience a continuance of those testimonies of public favour which had been lavished upon her, by an uninterrupted run of the piece.

MR. JOHN PALMER.

The late Mr. John Palmer, the performer, on the perusal of the play of Vortigern, was most particularly struck with the following lines in that drama; which, he was pleased to say, conveyed all the spirit of the writer to whom I had attributed them. They were delivered by Mr. Kemble, in the part of Vortigern; being as follows:

Give me a sword!
I have so clogg'd and badged this with blood
And slippery gore, that it doth mock my gripe.
A sword! I say.

Vortigern was supposed to be returning hastily from the thickest of the battle, where he had been engaged in dreadful carnage.

PUBLICATION OF THE PLAY OF VORTIGERN.

It is astonishing to observe how very frequently persons neglect opportunities which present themselves of realising money. Either from bad advice or some secret motive, Mr. Samuel Ireland, instead of publishing the play of Vortigern on the night of its representation, deferred the bringing of it forward until after I had confessed that the manuscripts were the productions of my own pen; whereas had Mr. Ireland followed a different line of conduct, the profits of the piece would have been exceedingly great; for having some time after demanded the opinion of Mr. Barker, the bookseller, of Russel Street, Covent Garden, respecting the publication of that play, he stated to me as follows:— "Sir, had Mr. Samuel Ireland applied to me ten days previous to the night of the performance of the piece, and desired to know what I would have given for the manuscript of the Vortigern, I would have bound myself under any penalty not to

have made one copy public before the hour of *four* on the night of its representation; and, under such a restriction, I would gladly have paid him one thousand guineas for the copy-right, taking every risk upon myself as to the future sale of the production."

PRINTING OF THE PLAYS OF VORTIGERN AND HENRY THE SECOND.

A considerable period having transpired from the representation of Vortigern at Drury Lane theatre, Mr. Samuel Ireland applied to Mr. Barker to become the publisher of that drama, as well as the Henry the Second, which soon afterwards appeared, and is at the present moment to be purchased at his shop in Russel Street.

I cannot close this statement respecting Mr. Barker without offering him my sincere thanks for many curious facts contained in these volumes which would have otherwise escaped my recollection, as well as for his kindness in having obliged me by the loan of several pamphlets on the sub-

ject of the manuscripts, which are now out of print and very rarely to be found.

CONCLUSIVE STATEMENT RELATIVE TO VORTIGERN.

As internal tranquillity is the most estimable blessing human nature can enjoy, I think it requisite, ere I close the statements respecting the play of Vortigern, to insert the ensuing stanzas, which were composed after the condemnation of that piece, which had for so long a period occupied the public attention, and had so unceasingly preyed upon my feelings as to render my life burdensome to me.

ON BEING RELIEVED FROM THE WEIGHT WHICH OPPRESSED MY MIND.

'Tis not the bolt, the bar, and cell,
That can controul mankind:
That which alone creates his hell
Is a tormented mind.

'Tis not the genius fraught with fires
That galling fetters bind,
But 'tis that wretch whose vile desires
Have gangren'd o'er his mind.

'Tis not the prison's baleful gloom,
Nor jailer's mien unkind ;
No; not all these can ever doom
The free and guiltless mind.

'Tis not the terror of disgrace
That keeps the soul confin'd:
All ills the suff'rer may efface,
So he be free in mind.

Such is my plea : with this I'm bless'd :
For, after all, I find
With sov'reign Truth my soul's at rest;
All's tranquil in my mind.

THE PLAY OF HENRY THE SECOND.

Having heard with attention the diversity of opinions which had been given respecting the play of Vortigern, I conceived that I might profit by the information thus acquired, and therefore determined on writing another drama, which I planned from the story of Henry the Second and fair Rosamond; a subject that appeared to me amply stored with incident for the structure of a dramatic performance: and to the selection of that monarch's reign I was the more incited, as the genius of William Shakspeare had been so amply

displayed in dramatising the histories of our Henries—the Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth. On the completion of this play, it was by all allowed to be a more finished composition than the Vortigern; and the only regret was that I had not brought it forward prior to that play. There is however a very conclusive reason on that head: for as it had never been thought of till a considerable time after the production of Vortigern, I might exclaim, with the Governor in the Critic,

> " The Spanish fleet thou *canst* not see . . . because . . .
> It is not yet in sight."

The plan of the play of Henry the Second I formed from a thin folio containing the life and reign of that monarch: and I was about ten weeks occupied in its composition. It was delivered to Mr. Samuel Ireland in my own hand-writing: nor was I ever at the trouble of reproducing it in the disguised hand, upon old paper, as my confession of the transaction intervened, and thus prevented my being put to that unnecessary trouble.

QUOTATIONS FROM THE PLAY OF HENRY THE SECOND.

As the composition of Henry the Second was esteemed so far superior to my Vortigern, I shall in the present instance insert a few passages which were deemed most striking by those gentlemen who were in the habits of frequenting Mr. Samuel Ireland's mansion.

The following lines appear in that scene where the King is first supposed to meet Rosamond de Clifford; being meant as descriptive of himself.—

Henry. O that I could mellow this iron tongue,
And fashion it to music of soft love!
But so it is, from my childhood upwards
I have been bred in hoarse and jarring war:
My spring of youth within a camp was spent:
There have I sat upon a soldier's knee;
Whilst round my neck was twin'd a giant arm,
So toughly set that one might say indeed
The sinews that did work it were of brass:
There 'twas I learnt the soldier's untun'd song,
The morning's onset, and the bloody 'fray.
Here cours'd the bristly man'd and foaming steed,
With fire-spitting eyes and trampling hoof;
Upon whose back bestrode an English knight.
Unnumber'd were the youths of France he slew,

Of Bourbon's sons or Orléans' proud heirs.
How many pedigrees and *cotes d'armures*
Beneath his mighty arm were blotted out!
Whilst smoking from their horses' flanks ran down
The blood of all their proud nobility.
Then would he tell how long the fight did last,—
From six i'the morn till ev'ning clocks toll'd eight;
How then they bore from off the blood-stain'd field
Their clay-cold fathers, brothers, countrymen.—
Here would he pause awhile
(For memory did whisper pleasures past),
Till I with childish innocence look'd up,
And bade him to go on.—But, oh! the sight
Turn'd towards, was his glittering eyes.
Whilst the big tears from off his rugged chin
Rain'd down upon my young and beardless face,
I would have chid his silence, but could not;
For if such sturdy hearts as his could melt,
Why, then methought there must be cause indeed.—
This, lady, was my school; thus was I taught:
And if such tales can please thy tender ear,
Rough and unpolish'd as most true they are,
Behold the man will sit the live-long day,
Of lingering sieges, marchings, battles, tell;
Where thirsty Mars so glut hath been with blood,
That sick'ning appetite yearn'd out "no more!"

The ensuing lines were given to the King, in one of the scenes where he is supposed to express his ardent passion for the object that enslaved his mind.

Henry. Yes, sweet love! but Venus too was busy;
And whilst she did bedeck thee with her charms,
Was pleas'd so with the work, that she ne'er thought
How she herself had stripp'd, giving thee all!
As I kiss thee, methinks sweet Love himself
Sits on thy front, and waves thy silv'ry hair,
As, jealous, he would keep me from the theft.
Yet he ne'er thinks how ev'ry gentle touch,
From these, his silken whips, make it more sweet;
For, gliding o'er my lips, they do distil
Thick golden odours, to the taste as sweet
As sleepy dove's eyes to the love-sick heart.

The annexed speeches were given to the haughty Becket, in different parts of the play of Henry the Second, and were much dwelt upon by numerous persons who esteemed themselves perfect judges of Shakspeare's style and his mode of expression.

Becket. Why, thus and thus it is: the matter argu'd,
Both parts justly weigh'd and well consider'd,
Judgement too given with no partial tongue,
Will speak this verdict:—
Happiness with Ambition bears no kin:
For thus: Content dwells not with Ambition;
And he who lacks content lacks happiness.
This lab'ring mind, then, tells me 't would be happy,
Yet whispers "I would fain be greater too."—

Peace! thou vile intruding mass of folly!
Thou'dst willingly embrace two properties
Which bear such hatred and dread enmity
That soon they'd kindle, blaze, and burn thee up.
Of one then make thy choice: more thou canst not.—
Give me, then, greatness. Hath not Fortune bow'd,
Stoop'd, cring'd, yea knelt, that I should raise her up?
For what was Becket but a poor man's son,
That walks the common vulgar road of life:
Dies: when dead, is quite forgotten?
What is Becket now?—the friend of Theobald!
Who ranks in station and in dignity
Next to the king himself; yea, and more too,
For he doth bear the crown of holy church,
Is king and sov'reign o'er the souls of men,
And not of earthly matters the frail judge.

Becket. What! e'en so? archdeacon of my church?
Aye, and, if my senses do not mock me,
More shall be thine ere long. So went the tune;
And in conclusion, "Thou mayst command me."—
Now, Becket, say to thyself, Wouldst be poor?
Wouldst shun ambition? Wouldst spurn at greatness?
No! no! thou'rt anhunger'd, and I will feed thee.
Off, then, vile suit! go cover silly knaves,
That know to cringe whene'er the great man frowns.—
Henceforth be thou stubborn, proud, and haughty.
If majesty do frown, knit thou thy brow;
If he do smile, why then be thou placid:
Yet always bear in mind thy dignity.—
But hold! Who is't comes hither to lord me?
Brave Harry! proud, and haughty too, as I.

Noble his spirit as his mind is great:
Distant to those whom most he doth esteem;
Yea, in so much that no man e'er could say
" I was the friend, the favour'd, of my prince."
If so, Becket, how compass thy great ends?
Shame! thou fickle mind, wilt thou flag at last?
Doth not the seaman, for some hundred marks,
Plough the rude waves, and in a little case,
In compass scarcely bigger than a needle's eye
When floating on this vasty element,
Doth he not risk both life and wealth to boot;
And shall Becket be afraid? Fie! shame on't!
Oh, attend then, each organ of the soul:
Hear thy stern lord's peremptory decree,
And on thy coronet 'grave thou these words,—
" If Becket lives, then lives he in greatness;
" If not, why then content let Becket die."
Life *sans* renown a thing so lowly is,
That dusky oblivion were sweeter far.

Becket. The dying man that can thus sweetly sleep,
Must wear a soul within his outward flesh
That knows no sin.—How gently heaves his breast
All cover'd with the silky snow-white beard!
He smiles, as if an angel kiss'd his lips,
And whisper'd him of joys that were to come.
Sweet soul! thou hast an everlasting seat,
A throne in Heav'n above.—Could men but look,
And see a sight like this, they were all blest:
Sin would grow out of date, would be forgot.

Becket. Man hath his day of joy and misery.

How short the one! how lasting is the other!
With me, the first is long blown o'er, and now
The second comes, to mock my tortur'd soul
With ideot laughter, ringing to mine ears
My loss of power, my faded glory!—
This o'erpeering front, that bore a sun
Outshone the girdled brow of majesty,
Now clouded, dim, and pale! Oh, I am sick!—
Tush! tush! the sleep of death will cure all thoughts.—
And yet, must this my wholesome goodly flesh
Rot, and serve to feed the crawling earth-worm,
Who nothing savours but of dust and clay?—
I tremble at the thought! And e'en but now
They wind about my flesh, and to the feel
Are damp and cold as that same humid sweat
Which frets from out the front of dying man!—
Yet it must be so: Death will have his due;
The worm will feast his fill, and man must rot.
Thus much for the body corruptible.
As for the soul!—I would, but cannot, speak;
And were I, all would be conjectural;
My account would stand as clear at last
As now that I have nothing utter'd.

EPILOGUE TO KING HENRY THE SECOND.

The following lines were composed in imitation of the choruses introduced in many of Shakspeare's historical plays, and in order to apologise to the audience for the change of time and place; which must

necessarily occur in composing a drama comprising many years of the life of the principal character of the scene. I need scarcely add, that the two concluding lines were meant to allude to myself, though the believers in the papers supposed them to intimate that it was our bard who was young when the drama in question was written. The introduction of such a couplet was assuredly incautious; but I then conceived myself so secure from detection that I was not deterred from producing them: and indeed, when the story relative to one William-Henry Ireland, which will appear in a subsequent part of this work, is taken into consideration, every reader must confess that there could be no hazard in the introduction of the two lines in question.

If from our play returning to your homes,
Ye chance to read the story as 'tis writ,
And find our Harry cross the seas for France;
Our Becket unto Rome for succour fly;
Thence unto Louis' court, to meet his king;
Where, friends, ye find this haughty priest once more

Invited home unto his dignities:
When this ye read, do not your author blame:
He could not bear ye on swift lightning's wing,
O'er billowy seas, deserts, and gay towns;
Or show within the compass of one hour
The business of a twenty summers' course.
Yet, should ye frown, look back upon his play,
And let our Harry's courage and sweet love
Forgiveness beg for his o'erleaping time.
Our haughty and ambitious Becket, too,
Shall plead the lack of time. Yet, after all,
Should any present still remain unkind,
And carry with him to his nightly couch
The frown of discontent: Oh, should this be,
Then think how much the writer here hath toil'd
To please, and show, in this our Harry's reign,
The pride and glory of our English land,
The unstain'd thunder of our regal lion.
No brow so rough but sure will smooth at this;
No frown so black but will to sweetness turn,
And, bright as sun when bursting from the east,
Drive night away.——Yet why entreat ye thus?
No more, no more: ye smile, and look so sweet,
I'll to our young and trembling author say,
Ye heard, ye smil'd, and did applaud his play.

BIOGRAPHIA DRAMATICA.

Some time after the production of the play of King Henry the Second, Mr. S. Ireland accidentally met with a passage in

the *Biographia Dramatica* which tended greatly to strengthen the believers in the manuscripts in their opinion of the originality of the play of Henry the Second. The words in the *Biographia* were as follow:

"Henry I. and Henry II., by Wm. Shakspeare and Rob. Davenport.—In the books of the Stationers' company, the 9th of Sept. 1653, an entry is made of the above title; but what species of the drama it was, or whether one or two performances, are facts not ascertained. Whatever it might be, it suffered in the general havoc made by Mr. Warburton's servant."

PUBLICATION OF HENRY II.

On the 14th of June 1796 I wrote a letter to Mr. Samuel Ireland, of which one paragraph will plainly prove how unconnected my actions were with any thing like a desire of gain. The passage is as follows:

"As you have yet no proof but my parole for the gift of Henry the Second, I now tell you that I beg your acceptance of the publication of Vortigern, and the whole of the profits of Henry the Second."

The above circumstance would have escaped my recollection did it not appear in Mr. S. Ireland's printed advertisement at the beginning of the play of Henry the Second (*vide* page 2), where it was purposely inserted to prove Mr. Ireland's right to the publication of the dramas in question.

A SERIES OF DRAMAS FROM WILLIAM THE CONQUEROR TO QUEEN ELIZABETH.

Had the play of Vortigern succeeded with the public, and the manuscripts been acknowledged as genuine, it was my intention to have completed a series of plays from the reign of William the Conqueror to that of queen Elizabeth; that is to say, I should have planned a drama on every reign the subject of which had not been treated of by Shakspeare.

PLANS OF CERTAIN PLAYS DEPOSITED IN THE HANDS OF ALBANY WALLIS, ESQ.

Upon my confession of the whole transaction to Mr. Albany Wallis (as will be

hereinafter stated), I placed in that gentleman's hands the written outlines of dramas on some few of our monarchs' reigns which had not occupied the genius of our bard. The theatrical production descriptive of the reign of queen Elizabeth I intended to have entitled The Virgin Queen. The subject of William the Conqueror had, however, greatly occupied my attention: and some portion of the play having been written, I shall give, under the following head, a specimen of the style.

SPEECH FROM THE PLAY OF WILLIAM THE CONQUEROR, IMITATIVE OF SHAKSPEARE'S STYLE.

The ensuing lines were to have been delivered by Earl Edwyn (who entered into a conspiracy against the Norman invader), after waiting for Marcarus, another conspirator, near Westminster Abbey.

Oh my good lord, how irksome pass'd the time
While in yon porch I did await your coming!
Yet as this crystal arch, this bright heaven,
Doth shine upon the emerald-tipped wave,
And paint upon the deep each passing cloud;
E'en so the smallest and most gentle plant

That waves before the breath of thee, sweet heaven,
To man gives food for contemplation,
And shows how soon his blazing flame of youth
Must sink on age's chilling icy bed,
And dwindle down to second nothingness.
Look but on yon clock, whose lanky fingers,
The tolling heralds of swift-winged Time;
Whose clapper wakens men from drowsy sleep,
Changing the dreary stillness of black night
To day's first infancy, the blushing morn;
While blest Aurora rears her purple crest,
And tip-toe stands, shaking her golden hair,
Eager to visit the busy sons of men:
Her blazing journey ended, down she sinks:
And so I liken her to man's strange end.
Look on yon pile, under whose fretted roof
So many kings have seiz'd the precious gem
Of royalty, and suck'd the courtiers'
Lip-labour'd lies———
Where are ye now?—dead, alas! and rotten!—
Oh, my good lord, let us from hence away:
This spot doth smell too strong of royal dust;
Throwing its lures to catch the minds of men;
Blowing in their ears the fev'rous blast
Of mirth, feasts, merriment, prosperity;
Till on a sudden grappling with their souls,
Thou knittest them at once in death eterne.

THE DEVIL AND RICHARD.

Having perused several curious interludes and sacred mysteries, from the pen of Bayle, &c., I determined on producing a performance of the same nature, and selected the subject of the Devil and Richard the Third; supposing it to have been performed, immediately after the coronation of king Henry the Seventh, by the singing boys of St. Paul's cathedral. I made a considerable advance in this interlude; which I had written fair upon vellum, emblazoning the margins and capital letters in the missal style. Upon my discovery of the whole Shaksperian business, as much as was executed of the performance in question fell into the hands of Mr. George Steevens, who procured it from Mr. Richardson, printseller, in the Strand. As I have no transcript of the piece in question, the following plan of the title of the interlude as written, is merely from recollection: the four lines succeeding I remember

were spoken by Richard the Third, on the appearance of the Devil.

"An Enterlude
off the
Divil ande Richarde
As yt was don by the Boyes of Powles
Att the Crownacion of owr Soveraine Lorde Kynge Henrye seven afterr the Kyllynge off the Bloode Traitor Richarde att the Battaile off Bosworthe feeld," *&c.*

"O maisterr Divil, I wou'd crownedd bee,
Ande toe my wife tak faireste Elsabethe.
Wilte thou wi̅ awl thye myghte and mayne ayde mee,
Ande kynge's sonns straite laye in coldenn dethe?"

The principal characters in this curious performance were King Richard the Third, King Henry the Seventh, the Archangel Gabriel, the Devil, &c.

FIRE AT MR. WARBURTON'S.

Many objections continued to be raised against the scorched appearance of all the papers (which I have fully accounted for under the head "Shaksperian Ink"), till a circumstance occurred, at a period when the papers were very voluminous, which seemed to throw a new light on the busi-

ness, and even more strongly to validate the authenticity of the manuscripts. Mr. S. Ireland, upon inquiry, was credibly informed, by persons who had known Mr. Warburton, that a fire happened at his house, in the neighbourhood of Fleet Street, about thirty-six years before, that destroyed all his effects, amongst which were many books and manuscripts. Many of these papers were shrewdly surmised to have been the writings of Shakspeare: so that when that circumstance was stated to me, who was anxious to catch at any substantiated fact which might apply to the papers, I consequently stated "that the world, I trusted, would no longer entertain a doubt as to the validity of the papers, as their burned appearance was now accounted for by their having been rescued during the conflagration of Mr. Warburton's property."

ADMISSION TICKET.

The influx of persons to see the manuscripts increased to such a degree as to

render it necessary that some regular plan should be adopted, in order that Mr. Ireland's house might not be an exhibition at all hours of the day: in consequence of which, cards were printed in the following terms, which were distributed among the subscribers to the Shaksperian volume; each of whom was entitled to bring with him one gentleman or lady, to inspect the papers, on the days appointed (being Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays), between the hours of twelve and three.

"SHAKSPEARE.

"Admit a subscriber, to view the Shakspeare papers, at No. 8, Norfolk Street, Strand.

day of 1795."

PUBLICATION OF THE MISCELLANEOUS PAPERS.

As the papers at this period had excited universal attention, and as Mr. S. Ireland conceived, that, if published, they would give infinite satisfaction to the public, and prove a source of benefit to his family, I was of course applied to, in order to know whether the supposed gentleman would

have any objection to the manuscripts being printed: my reply was immediately as follows: "they were only given to me as curiosities; and by no means will the gentleman agree to their being made public." From that period the above question was unceasingly put to me; and with some degree of warmth Mr. Ireland would frequently remark, "If the gentleman be a friend of yours, why does he set his face against a publication which it is admitted on all hands would be productive of a fortune to you?" My reply was still invariably the same.—At length these constant importunities rendered life almost insupportable; and I then for the first time ventured to question Mr. Ireland in the following manner: "Suppose they should not be really manuscripts of Shakspeare's?" The reply was: "If all the men of abilities living were now to come forward and severally attest that each had undertaken his particular part to produce those papers, I would not believe them."—The fact was, I had an idea of hazarding every oppro-

brium, and confessing the fact, rather than witness the publication of the papers: but when such an answer was made to my first inquiry, I very naturally concluded, if Mr. Ireland be of such an opinion, how will he credit the affirmation that I have alone planned and executed the papers?—From that period I became even more uncomfortable: and one day after dinner, some warm conversation having transpired, I exclaimed, in the heat of the moment, and to procure some peace, "Well, sir, if you are determined on publishing the papers, remember, I deliver this message from the gentleman—'You do it at your own risk'; as he will have no concern in the business, or ever give up his name to the world."—"On those terms I very willingly *accept his acquiescence*," was Mr. Ireland's reply; and from that moment the intended publication of the work was announced to the world.

PROSPECTUS.

The following was the plan of the proposal delivered to such persons as came to

view the manuscripts when the publication of the papers was decided upon by Mr. Samuel Ireland.—

"SHAKSPEARE.

"Norfolk Street, Strand, March 4, 1795.

"Mr. Samuel Ireland begs leave to acquaint the public, that the literary treasure which has recently fallen into his hands, forming an interesting part of the works of our divine bard, Shakspeare, is now arranging, and will speedily be put to press.

"This publication will consist of a variety of authentic and important documents respecting the private and public life of this wondrous man; an original complimentary letter from queen Elizabeth, under her own hand, and authenticated by that of the bard; original deeds, contracts, and other instruments relative to his theatrical concern; an original correspondence with a noble personage upon a transaction nearly interesting to himself; a letter, and five stanzas in verse, written in his own hand when very young, and addressed to the lady whom he afterwards married; together with the expression and feeling of his very soul upon a subject the most momentous that can occupy the thoughts of mortal man.

"All these papers, except the legal iustruments, are in his hand-writing, and these are under the hand and seal of himself, and the parties concerned.

"In this publication will likewise be given a copy of the tragedy of King Lear, from the original manuscript, in the hand-writing of Shakspeare. This copy will be found materially to differ, in various particulars of much curiosity and interest, from any edition of that play now extant.

" In this volume *fac-similes* will be given of the above miscellaneous manuscripts, and of the title-page, and first and last leaves of the play, which, Mr. Ireland presumes, will be deemed sufficient specimens of the whole.

"The work will be further illustrated with engravings from original drawings which have been found among the manuscripts above mentioned, and which will add new lights to the history of the British stage, of which Shakspeare may truly be denominated the *mighty father*.

" This publication will be comprised in one volume, to correspond with the folio edition of Shakspeare now printing at the Shakspeare press, and will be forwarded for publication with all possible dispatch.

" As this work will be attended with considerable expense and trouble, Mr. Ireland receives subscriptions at his house in Norfolk Street; Mr. Faulder's, in New Bond Street; Mr. Egerton's, at Whitehall; Mr. Payne's, at the Mews Gate; Messrs. White's, in Fleet Street; and at Messrs. Leigh and Sotheby's, York Street, Covent Garden.

"The price to subscribers will be four guineas.

" Any gentleman, on sending his address in writing, or being introduced by a subscriber, may view the MSS. at No. 8, Norfolk Street, on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, between the hours of twelve and three.

" *Mr. Ireland acquaints every gentleman who has paid his subscription, and who has not seen the papers, that if on viewing them he feels any doubt respecting their authenticity, he may instantly have his subscription returned.*

" Mr. Ireland informs the public, that with the above papers was discovered an historical play, founded on the

story of Vortigern and Rowena, taken from Holingshed, and which is in the hand-writing of Shakspeare.—This play being intended for theatrical representation, will not be printed till the eve of its appearance on the stage."

TO THE MANES OR THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE LATE EARL OF CHARLEMONT.

To the letter addressed to the earl of Charlemont, at the commencement of Mr. Malone's Inquiry into the authenticity of the supposed Shaksperian MSS., page 1, is the following note, reflecting as much *honour* on his late lordship as on the writer of the paragraph in question.—

"As my noble friend's name (lord Charlemont) appeared in the list of subscribers prefixed to the *Miscellaneous Papers, &c.*, here examined, I am authorised by him to say, that he subscribed to that work at the request of a gentleman who furnished him with a splendid prospectus of it, which he carried from hence to Ireland; and that, if lord Charlemont had known as much of it as he now does, he would not have given either his name or his money to the publication."

As Mr. Malone was warranted by his lordship to insert the above, I think the earl of Charlemont, who confessedly had the prospectus, might have perused the

lines which appear in italics; as his lordship would not in that case have had to bemoan the payment of his money: but should he still lament the imposition practised upon his purse, the sum is not so exorbitant but he may redeem it, by returning the volume to W. H. Ireland, who is always to be heard of, among the Nine, in Grub Street; though not exactly amusing himself in *playing at bowls*, as was Willy Shakspeare, according to the rhapsody of Mr. Malone.

APOLLO AND MALONE.

At the close of the celebrated *Inquiry* into the authenticity of the supposed Shaksperian manuscripts (consisting of upwards of 400 pages, written expressly to prove that a forgery which the author asserts was so palpable a one as to be discoverable at the first glance), Mr. Malone falls into one of his Hibernian slumbers, and in that somniferous state supposes himself wafted to the court of Apollo, to hear the judgement of that god on the daring impostor. Having perused the farrago of nonsense,

in the dream alluded to (*vide* page 355, &c., of the work above quoted), Mr. Ireland wrote the following *impromptu*.

With a sorrowful phiz, sage Minerva, one morn,
Apollo bespoke, on Parnassus' high steep:
"'Tis stated *Malone* is come here!" With just scorn
Apollo replied, "He was here *in his sleep*."

THE CHANDOS PICTURE.

In the above-mentioned dream Mr. Malone is honoured with the sight of several of our poetic ancestors, who are facetiously engaged in a game at bowls; and among the rest he instantly recognises his dear friend William Shakspeare, occupied with the same amusement, from the strong resemblance he bore to the *only authentic portrait of him, which belonged to the late duke of Chandos, and of which*, says the egotist, "*I have three copies by eminent masters.*" This circumstance produced the annexed *jeu d'esprit*.—

I knew our Shakspeare's gentle face:
The reason why you'll plainly see:
His picture 'long'd to *Chandos' Grace*;
Of which I'VE got rare copies THREE.

THE COMMENTATOR COMMENTED UPON.

There are certain persons so attached to the word *ego*, that, for the sake of introducing the following couplets with *eclat*, I shall suppose the critic alluded to penning as follows:

"Lines addressed to me upon my learned and very deep researches, emendations, corrections, and the new light which I have thrown upon the readings of our immortal bard in my last celebrated edition of the works of William Shakspeare, *&c.*

An Irish critic, stor'd with brains of wool,
Produc'd an Irish brat,—an Irish *bull;*
Made notes on him whose genius we adore;
Besmear'd of Avon's bard the sterling lore;
Prov'd by his notes what Shakspeare was at once,
—A godlike bard—himself, an Irish *dunce.*"

MR. MALONE'S WISH.

I will not exactly vouch for the truth of the following statement, but I was absolutely informed that after Mr. Malone had perused the above lines, in a volume relative to my Shaksperian fabrication, which was placed in his hands, he returned the

book in question stating, "There is but one more document I wish to see respecting him," alluding to myself: "and what is that, sir?" was the interrogatory. "His last dying speech and confession," answered the commentator with petulance, delivering the volume into the hands of the person to whom he had so addressed himself.

MAISTER COWLEY'S DRAWING.

Among the rest of my productions was a large head of our bard, which I executed on vellum, in body colours, affixing his arms in one corner and his name and age in another. This performance, I know not why, was supposed to be from the hand of the facetious master Cowley, the player; and was gravely stated to have formerly adorned the green-room of the Globe theatre, in all probability as a companion to the Shylock and Bassanio drawing which has been before mentioned.

BEN JONSON.

As I had left a broad space beneath the painting, I conceived that I might turn it to account, and for that purpose wrote the following lines, as from the pen of Ben Jonson, whereto I affixed his name: but, as the composition did not exactly please me, I took care to efface the whole previous to its delivery to Mr. Ireland; leaving, however, the signature of Jonson legible, which I had copied from his handwriting affixed to the first edition in folio of Shakspeare's plays, which I had purchased of White, in Fleet Street, for thirty guineas, at which high price it was sold because conceived to be (and I have no doubt that it really was) the presentation copy from the editors of Shakspeare's plays to Ben Jonson: in confirmation of which, some lines in Latin had been written over the signature of Jonson, which the binder of an earlier period had cut through, but from the remains of which the words *ex dono, &c.*, were obvious.

LINES AFFIXED TO THE DRAWING OF SHAKSPEARE.

Behold this face; and, if thou read'st aright,
His eyes should beam Apollo's radiant light:
Deep penetration should his look impart,
And Pity's touch, to thrill the feeling heart.
Or wouldst thou Mars behold, thou still mayst find
The rugged soldier's daring dauntless mind.
Philosophy, religion, vice, and wit:
Of passions here the mastery is writ.
Envy in vain, with pois'nous Slander's breath,
Would on his temples blast the verdant wreath:
For long as Fame shall sound th' applauding blast,
So shall his blooming crest for ever last.

SHAKSPERIAN LIBRARY.

In order to augment the bulk of the Shaksperian papers, I had recourse to the introducing of volumes and tracts (to about the number of eighty), containing notes written in the disguised hand, while on the title-page of each appeared the signature of William Shakspeare; by which I meant to infer that the books in question had originally been in the possession of our bard: of which volumes, the ensuing were the most conspicuous, as containing a

variety of annotations, presumed to be from the pen of our dramatist, relative to the authors of the works in question.

CHURCHYARD'S WORTHINESS OF WALES.

This tract was a small quarto, and, independent of the notes on its margin annexed by myself (that were thought to render it invaluable), was a very curious poem, printed in 1587; and being one of the first documents of this nature produced, was esteemed highly interesting by the inspectors of the fabricated papers.

CARION'S CHRONICLES.

This work, bearing date A. D. 1550, records, in poetry, the prominent features of all our monarchs' reigns to that period. —Upon the margin of this production I annexed several manuscript notes; and, to the best of my recollection, was particular in affixing the same to those particular monarchs' reigns which have been dramatised by our immortal poet.

SPENSER'S FAERIE QUEENE.

Upon the margins of this poem, printed in two volumes quarto, bearing respectively the dates 1590 and 1596, I was most particular in my comments; well aware that a writer of such celebrity as Spenser must have attracted the notice of Shakspeare; in addition to which, I was fully convinced that such notes would be regarded with the strictest scrutiny by every visitant in Norfolk Street.—The subsequent event fully established the justness of my supposition: and so much were the notes esteemed, and such was the value conceived to be thereby attached to the two volumes, that a gentleman (who shall be nameless), positively made an offer to Mr. Samuel Ireland of sixty pounds for this edition of Spenser's Fairy Queen, with the marginal notes so introduced by myself as the comments of William Shakspeare.

RELATION OF THE IMPRISONMENT AND EXECUTION OF THE TRAITORS.

This tract, bearing date A. D. 1606, is comprised in about twenty pages octavo, and gives a circumstantial detail of the manner in which Guy Fawkes and his associates suffered the punishment awarded them for their diabolical attempt against their sovereign and his parliament. My annotations upon this little pamphlet were very diffuse. I particularly remember that on the margin of the page in which it is stated that Guy Fawkes was so emaciated as scarcely to be able to ascend the scaffold, I wrote a very feeling note, indicative of the philanthropy of Shakspeare; who at the conclusion of the note was supposed to make the following remark.—

SHAKSPERIAN REMARK ON THE EXECUTION OF THE TRAITORS.

"Thatte hee" (William Shakspeare) "hadd beene intreatedd bye hys freynde John Hemynges to attende sayde executyonne, butte thatte he lykedde notte toe beholde syghtes of thatte kynde."

GUY FAWKES INSTEAD OF GUY JOHNSON.

I believe on the margin containing the last quoted I wrote another note, purporting that Shakspeare remembered to have seen and conversed with "maisterre Guy Fawkes" at the Globe theatre; and that from his manners he should not have taken him for such a man as he afterwards proved to be. Upon mentioning this circumstance to Mr. James Caulfield, well known for his research into the history of this conspiracy, he convinced me that I had been guilty of a most flagrant error, by assuring me, that, if Shakspeare had really remembered him, it must have been by the name of Guy Johnson, as that of Fawkes was only an assumed name when he entered into the conspiracy.

I need scarcely add that this fact was till then wholly unknown to me; as when I wrote the annotations in question I had no idea whatsoever but that the name of Fawkes was the real appellation of that celebrated traitor, whose sanguinary cha-

racter is still preserved to public detestation on the fifth day of each succeeding November.

RARITY OF THE TRACT RELATIVE TO THE CONSPIRATORS.

After this tract had been displayed to the inspectors of the papers, some of them, who were notorious as collectors of rare books, declared to Mr. Ireland that they had never before seen a copy of it. This declaration conferred additional value on the document in question: and many black-letter collectors visited Norfolk Street for the sole purpose of viewing the tract as a typographical rarity.

DUPLICATE COPY OF THE TRACT.

Notwithstanding the acknowledged curiosity of this pamphlet, it is not a little wonderful that within a month from my delivering to Mr. Samuel Ireland the copy illustrated with the marginal notes before described, a second happened by chance to

fall into my hands, bound up with several other miscellaneous pamphlets. To the title-page of this duplicate copy I annexed the name of Shakespeare, with the following note: "Thys lyttle booke I ha hadde ownce befoure;" evidently alluding to the former copy.

Such are the facts relative to the two impressions of the rare tract explanatory of the imprisonment and execution of the gunpowder conspirators, which created so much astonishment in the mind of every collector of black-letter rarities.

MESSRS. WHITE AND OTRIDGE, BOOKSELLERS.

Ere I close the statement respecting the Shaksperian library, it will not be amiss to acquaint the world that to Messrs. White in Fleet Street, and Mr. Otridge in the Strand, I am indebted for many of the volumes whereto I afterwards annexed the Shaksperian notes; as it was from these gentlemen I made many large purchases. From numerous volumes of tracts procured

from them, I selected those particular pamphlets whereto I penned the annotations. It was therefore utterly impossible for them to make any affidavit of the books having been recently in their libraries without the strictures so introduced by me on the margins.

HOLINGSHED'S CHRONICLE.

One of the books promised, and which I in vain endeavoured to procure with margins sufficiently broad to enable me to affix manuscript notes, was Holingshed's Chronicle, which our bard consulted on writing so many of his dramas. As it was supposed the observations in question would have been remarkably curious, I was no less importuned on account of this Chronicle than for the Shaksperian portrait after mentioned, and the edition of his works in folio.

WHOLE-LENGTH PORTRAIT OF SHAKSPEARE.

One day being seated at Mr. Samuel Ireland's after dinner, during the exhilira-

tion of the moment I was so bereft of my senses as to inform Mr. Ireland that a whole-length portrait, as large as life, and painted on board, would be forthcoming among the various other documents. I had soon sufficient cause to rue this effervescence of the moment; for scarcely a day transpired but I was hourly importuned respecting the whole-length portrait; the production of which, it was stated, would infallibly stamp the validity of the manuscripts.

FIRST EDITION OF SHAKSPEARE'S WORKS IN FOLIO.

Another very ridiculous assurance made by myself to Mr. Ireland, without a possibility of its realisation, was the promise of two copies in folio of Shakspeare's works with uncut leaves, for which I was equally tormented as for the whole-length portrait of our bard above alluded to.

NELL RUMMIN.

In a very scarce edition of the works of Skelton, poet-laureat in the reign of Henry

the Eighth, which was in my possession, were several miserable stanzas in commemoration of a celebrated *ale-wife* of the name of Eleanor Rummin, whose filthy debaucheries are therein sufficiently displayed. After the perusal of the stanzas I penned the following

EPITAPH.

An thou wouldst know who lies this stone beneath,
I'll tell thee, gentle friend:—
'Tis England's ale-wife: who one day with Death,
Forsooth, would make an end.
Thou'lt ask, perhaps, of what?—
Of ale and ailings,
Of jibes and railings,
And ranting pleasures of the brim-full pot.

Quoth old Nell Rummin to her bony guest,
"In troth I have no ail."
"Ailings thou hast," quoth he; "and at my feast
"Thy tun, I'm sure, wont fail
"To give me . . . . ."—"what?" quoth Nell:
"The ail of ailing,
"Thy soul's bewailing;
"For earthly ale hath bought thee ail in hell."

SIR THOMAS MORE'S JESTER.

As the play upon words was much in vogue in the reign of Elizabeth, I wrote

the following lines upon Henry Patenson, who was the fool, or jester, of sir Thomas More, lord chancellor of England in the reign of Henry the Eighth; which were of course intended to swell the bulk of the Shaksperian olio.

LINES UPON HENRY PATENSON, SIR THOMAS MORE'S JESTER.

More wit thou hadst than wits by rule:
Thou didst fool More, who was no fool.
More jibes thou told'st to judging More
Than fool ere told to judge before.
More wit More heard from Folly base;
More forgot more the sage's face.
Since more from Folly's cup More quaff'd,
Still more sage More at folly laugh'd.
Now which had most the sage's head—
Wise More, or Hal, who more wit said?

EPIGRAM ON SIR THOMAS MORE.

The following epigram is supposed to have been written by the great lord Bacon; the fact being well recorded.—

When More some time had chancellor been
No more suits did remain.
The same will never more be seen,
Till More be there again.

EPITAPH ON WILLIAM MORE.

In Stepney churchyard appears the ensuing epitaph on one William More.—

Here lies More, and no more than he.—
"More and *no* more!—how can that be?"

BLOODY BISHOP BONNER.

In Fox's Book of Martyrs is a wood-cut representation of bishop Bonner scourging a man with rods in his garden at Fulham. As I had early imbibed a peculiar hatred for the sanguinary character of that bigoted minister of a more bigoted queen, I wrote the following stanzas; which, as they were intended to have been brought forward, I shall give in their spurious dress.

O Bonnerr! thyne was fylthy witte,
So harde the breeche of mann to hytte,
Norr blush att suche dysplaye:
Butt thou alle blushynge hadst foreswore,
Thatte menn myghte blush forr thee: therefoure,
Thou took'st thys fylthy waye.

Butte hadste thou beene as breechelesse too,
Ande I the whipperr overr you,
Bye Charon and his floode!

Soe lustilye would I ha' hytte
Thou shouldste have homage payde mye wytte,
Bye blushynge redd withe bloode.

ACROSTICS.

As it was very common, in the reign of queen Elizabeth, to prefix to a work a complimentary acrostic on the author's name, written by some friend in commendation of his genius or talents, it was my intention to have produced a set of acrostics on various persons, and to have entitled the manuscript "A Crown Garlande daintilye besette withe costlye Gemmes."—The following are such as were already composed for that purpose.

ACROSTIC UPON KING RICHARD THE SECOND.

Ring a peal, whose doleful knell,
Injur'd prince, thy woes shall tell!
Come clear gem from Pity's eye:
Human feeling vents the sigh;
Angels, weep for charity.
Rueful chance that Death's dire frown
Doom'd the monarch and his crown!

ACROSTIC ON QUEEN ELIZABETH.

England, thrice happy earth!
Let me my notes upraise:—
I sing a maiden's birth—
Zealous to breathe her praise.
All sage and blooming queen,
Bounteous as Heav'n serene,
Eliza, let me echo round
Thy matchless worth with clarion sound:
Heaven's thy soil: thou'rt goddess of this ground.

ACROSTIC UPON THE UNFORTUNATE MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS.

Morning's rose at eve will fade,
And waste its perfume on the wind.
Ruder than all is Fate unkind—
You, the sweet rose, by Death bewray'd.

ACROSTIC UPON THE ACCOMPLISHED SIR PHILIP SIDNEY,

Who was unfortunately killed at the battle of Zutphen, in the Low Countries.

Sweet was thy song, Arcadian swain,
In valley, mountain, wood, and plain!
Darling of the Sisters Nine,
Nature moulded thee divine:
Each heav'nly radiance thus shone forth in one:
Youth was perfection;—and life's race was run.

TANJORE MAHARAJA SERFOGI'S SARASWATI

ACROSTIC ON HENRY PRINCE OF WALES.

The following lines were written to be placed under the portrait of Henry prince of Wales, the eldest son of king James the First, whose untimely death frustrated the darling hopes of the English nation, which beheld in this prince every glowing qualification that confers honour on the human mind.

Here Wisdom, Honour, Grace serene;—
Ev'ry attribute combines:
Noble prince, your valour shines
Resplendent in your martial eyne;
Your virtue's stamp'd upon your heav'nly mien.

ACROSTIC ON DUDLEY EARL OF WARWICK.

Warwick, fram'd to feats of arms,
All thy val'rous acts I'd sing;
Rouse to war with clarion string—
Warwick scorns Death's dire alarms.
In fight, the lion; peace, the dove;
Constant to Mars, and link'd to Love;
Kindred to heav'n and saints above.

ACROSTIC ON SIR ROBERT DUDLEY.

This young nobleman was the illegitimate son of Robert Sutton de Dudley, earl of Leicester. He was created duke of Northumberland by the emperor, for his services in making Leghorn a town of free trade. See Dugdale's Baronage.

Dudley, youth of Britain's isle,
  Unto Venus' boy allied:
Dudley, crown'd with Wisdom's smile,
  Long the God of Battles' pride:
Ev'ry strain shall join with me;
You taught my muse her minstrelsy.

ACROSTIC ON LORD SOUTHAMPTON.

The following lines will be found to bear an allusion to the supposed donation presented by that nobleman to our great dramatic lord.

Strains, noble friend, I waft to thee:
O let me sing in numbers free:
Ungrateful, if unmindful, I,
Traitor to truth, should give the lie;
Honour forgetting, if forgot
All which thy bounty made my lot;
Most Judas like, if in my breast
Polluted Treach'ry built its nest;

Turning to nought that praise which now,
O peerless lord, I must allow,
Nor check what Truth bids me avow,

ACROSTIC ON EARL RIVERS.

This young nobleman was the brother of Elizabeth Widvile, the consort of king Edward the Fourth, and shortly after the demise of that monarch was beheaded at Pomfret castle, by order of Richard duke of Gloucester, together with lord Grey and sir Thomas Vaughan. He was a great patroniser of literature; and to him we are indebted for some of the earliest productions of the first English printing-press, under the direction of William Caxton.

Rivers from their sources flow,
In the raging seas are lost;
Virtue meek receives the blow;
Envy nips the bud with frost:—
Rivers, Wisdom's choicest swain,
Saw life, met death, to live again.

ACROSTIC ON SHAKSPEARE.

To be placed under the portrait of our great dramatic lord.

Softly gliding down the stream,
Hear the dying swan divine,
Avon's bard, Apollo's beam,
Kindred of the muses nine.
Shakspeare's face, by skill array'd,
Poorly shows the painter's art:
Ev'ry touch should have display'd
All that sweetness can impart.
Rich in mind, in feeling true,
E'en Envy dies at thought of you.

ACROSTIC ON MAISTER WILLIAM-HENRY IRELAUNDE.

The subject to which these lines bear reference will be fully explained by the subsequent statements in this work appertaining to William Shakspeare and the supposed "maisterre William-Henrye Irelaunde, who savedde Shakspearé's lyfe fromme drownynge whenne onne Thames."

In vain my muse the lyre essays:
Ruder than Boreas is the sound.
Ev'ry touch doth echo round
Louder his worth whom I would praise.
And how shall I my gratitude impart?—
No verse can paint my grateful lays;
Doom'd to be inmates of this swelling heart.

LINES ON BEAUTY.

Beauty having been so very frequently pictured as a mere transitory object, I composed the ensuing stanzas; intending to have introduced them, with the other manuscripts, as the effusions of our immortal poet.

Beauty's like bubble on the water's brim;
Or like the gnat that round the flame doth skim;
  Or as the ice that meets the sun's hot glow.
It is a cheering ray 'mid April showers;
Or matin dews on summer's gaudy flowers;
  Or like the bosom of the spotless snow.

Beauty's like promis'd favour from the great;
Or like the pride and pomp of earthly state;
  Or as a glowworm to the gazer's sight.
It is as lark that sings in matin ray;
Or as the bloom that's cheer'd in early May;
  Or friendly gleam athwart the gloom of night.

The bubble breaks—the gnat is scorch'd in fires—
The sun melts ice—chill April's ray expires—
  The dew dissolves—the snow pure water yields—
The great forget—in death all pomp is lost—
The glowworm fades—the bloom is nipp'd by frost—
  The moon is scarf'd—the lark descends i'the fields.

Yea, with all these must beauty yield its prime,
Cropp'd by the chilling hand of hoary Time.

THE GENTLEMAN'S MAGAZINE.

It is worthy of remark, that two years after my discovery of the whole Shaksperian fabrication to the world, having read the above lines to a friend, he stated that some stanzas upon the same subject, and ascribed to Shakspeare, were to be found in the Gentleman's Magazine; and upon my making the request, he within a few days transcribed the poem in question; which, as a curious coincidence in sentiment and expression, I insert.

"BEAUTY'S VALUE."

Stated to have been printed from a corrected manuscript, and originally written by William Shakspeare.
See GEN. MAG. for Oct. 1750.

"Beauty is but a vain and fleeting good,
"A shining gloss that fadeth suddenly,
"A flow'r that dies when almost in the bud,
"A brittle glass that breaketh presently:—
"A fleeting good, a gloss, a glass, a flow'r,
"Lost, faded, broken, dead, within an hour.

"As goods when lost are wond'rous seldom found,
"As faded gloss no rubbing can excite,
"As flow'rs when dead are trampled on the ground,
"As broken glass no cement can unite;
"So beauty blemish'd once is ever lost,
"In spite of physic, painting, pains, and cost."

IMITATION OF HUDIBRAS.

Upon being requested to give some lines in the Hudibrastic style, by the friend who favoured me with the transcript of the above stanzas, and who had ever evinced much research respecting the Shaksperian papers, I wrote the following lines *impromptu*, with a lead pencil, on the cover of a letter.—

AURORA.

Aurora visits first the clown,
In dirty dingy russet gown:
For house-maids then she 'tires anew,
In scarlet cloak and bonnet blue:
For gentlefolk then paints and patches—
No burnish'd gold her beauty matches.
And thus bediz'n'd, straight she hies out,
To see, forsooth, what folks are about;
Nor cares a farthing for her honour,
But lets the rabble gaze upon her:
Till, tir'd at length, she squeamish grows,
And reddens to pull off her clothes:
Then sneaks—a jade!—although not wed,
Into sir Neptune's large green bed:
Romps, and with him plays at bo-peep,
Until they both fall fast asleep.

NIGHT.

In robes of chimney-sweeper dight,
Comes that ill-natur'd vixen Night;
Who scowling looks, as though she'd poy'son
The rays that linger 'bove horizon;
And finding Sol so loth to stir,
Claps on him her extinguisher.

BUTLER'S PARALLEL OF SHAKSPEARE AND JONSON.

As the opinion of our great satirist, Butler, on the poetical talents of Shakspeare, must, it is conceived, be interesting to every friend of literature, and as his sentiments are not in all probability very generally known, the ensuing quotation is made, as appertaining to our bard. Although in some respect irrelevant to the subject-matter of this work, its contents will, it is hoped, plead in excuse for its present insertion.

In Mr. Thyer's edition of Butler's Remains (vol. ii, p. 494), the satirical author of Hudibras has thus expressed himself with regard to the productions of Ben Jonson and Shakspeare:

"Men of the quickest apprehensions and aptest ge-

niuses to any thing they undertake, do not always prove the greatest masters in it: for there is more patience and phlegm required in those that attain to any degree of perfection, than is commonly found in the temper of active ready wits; that soon tire, and will not hold out; as the swiftest racehorse will not perform a long journey so well as a sturdy dull jade. Hence it is that Virgil, who wanted much of that natural easiness of wit that Ovid had, did nevertheless, with hard labour and long study, arrive at a higher perfection, than the other, with all his dexterity of wit, but less industry, could attain to. The same we may observe of *Jonson* and *Shakspeare*: for he that is able to think long and judge well will be sure to find out better things than another man can hit upon suddenly, though of more quick and ready parts; which is commonly but chance; and the other, art and judgement."

HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS THE PRINCE OF WALES.

As Mr. Ireland was given to understand that his royal highness was desirous of inspecting the papers, from the variety of opinions which he had heard upon the manuscripts, and the natural curiosity the subject excited in every breast, Mr. Ireland made it known, through the medium of some friends, that he would cheerfully attend upon any of the royal family with the papers for their inspection. In con-

sequence of this, a day was appointed, and Mr. Samuel Ireland repaired in a coach to Carlton House, with all the documents he possessed: but I was not made one of the party on that occasion. On his return, as I was of course very anxious to hear what had transpired, I requested a circumstantial detail of every occurrence attending his visit; which was to the best of my recollection as follows.—

Upon Mr. Ireland's entrance into the chamber, his royal highness, with that refinement upon affability for which he is certainly unrivalled, arose to receive him; and so completely divested himself of that dignity which from his situation he was so justly entitled to assume, as to render Mr. Ireland as unrestrained in his manners as if he had been in the company of his equals. In fine, Mr. Ireland's opinion of his royal highness, which I very frequently afterwards heard him utter, was, that his affability and elegant ease were such as to enable a person to be perfectly unrestrained; while it was at the same time

absolutely impossible for a well-bred man to presume, in the slightest degree, in consequence of that easy deportment which his royal highness adopted: but should a presumptuous freedom be hazarded, Mr. Ireland used frequently to assert, that the prince in such circumstances could instantly have recourse to a dignified deportment which must awe the most daring effrontery.

On the production of the manuscripts, his royal highness began to inspect them with the strictest scrutiny; when, to Mr. Ireland's infinite astonishment, he not only questioned him on every point with an acuteness which he had never before witnessed from the learned who had inspected the papers, but he also displayed a knowledge of antiquity, and an intimate acquaintance with documents of the period of Elizabeth, which Mr. Ireland had conceived was confined to such individuals only as had made that particular subject the object of their study.

Having carefully examined the manu-

scripts, and heard the language contained in the profession of faith and some other documents, which were read aloud by Mr. Ireland, his royal highness spoke to the following effect.

OPINION OF HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS THE PRINCE OF WALES.

"As far as the external appearance will witness for the validity of the documents, they certainly bear a strong semblance of age: to decide, however, peremptorily from this cursory inspection, would be unjustifiable; as in matters of this nature so much is to be said *pro* and *con*, that the decision requires mature reflexion. I certainly, Mr. Ireland, must compliment you much upon the discovery; as the name of Shakspeare, and every thing appertaining to him, is not confined alone to the literary world, but to the English nation; to which the publication will, I trust, afford that gratification which is expected to be derived from it."

MR. IRELAND'S DEPARTURE FROM CARLTON HOUSE.

While Mr. Ireland was arranging the manuscripts in order to their being taken back to the carriage, the prince continued to deliver his remarks on the papers he had inspected: and wheresoever the smallest ground of objection was apparent to his mind, he requested from Mr. Ireland an answer to his query, which was always put with ease, although a depth of penetration was apparent in the question; to which, from its novelty, Mr. Ireland very frequently found it difficult to make an apt reply.

Upon Mr. Ireland's quitting the prince's presence, his royal highness continued to display that urbanity which had characterised his conduct upon his first introduction into the chamber.

Such proved the visit of Mr. Ireland to Carlton House, as frequently detailed by himself.

The subject in question gave rise to the

following lines, which had their origin in Mr. Ireland's frequent encomiums on the prince, in which he was invariably joined by every friend who visited in Norfolk Street.

LINES ADDRESSED TO HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS THE PRINCE OF WALES.

'Tis not the title, or the prince's state,
That can from subjects true attention draw;
Pow'r may command applause from rankling hate,
And stiff-neck'd pomp inspire with frigid awe.

How cold the homage by such art inspir'd!
How lukewarm the affection which it brings!
True loyalty with ardent zeal is fir'd;
And such alone should grace the thrones of kings:

Behold the prince, whom England's sons revere;
Whose winning manners ev'ry breast subdue;
Who reigns in hearts through love, devoid of fear;
Proclaiming thus their homage staunch and true.

Long may the Minstrel tune his silv'ry chord,
And swell with clarion note the passing gales;
Long may the bards pay tribute to their lord,
And waft due praises to their prince of Wales.

No secret joys in gloomy pomp he finds:
Mild ev'ry act; while graceful ease and state
Plant love and due respect in humbler minds,
And curb the pride of the assuming great.

Long may the prince of Albion live to share
The heart-felt plaudits of th' admiring throng!
May blooming glory nip each bud of care,
And Britain's empire join the welcome song!

HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS THE DUKE OF CLARENCE.

In consequence of the general astonishment and curiosity excited by the manuscripts, his royal highness the duke of Clarence also became desirous of inspecting the papers: which being intimated to Mr. Ireland, a time was fixed upon; when I was made of the party, and with Mr. Samuel Ireland repaired to the apartments occupied by his royal highness in St. James's palace.

Having carefully inspected all the documents produced, the usual questions were put to me respecting the original discovery of the manuscripts, in which Mrs. J*rd*n also joined; when my former statements were, as usual, strictly adhered to. His royal highness, I perfectly well remember, made numerous objections, and particularly to the redundancy of letters apparent throughout the papers. To every question,

however, the same answers were made as usual: and thus the doubts which arose in his royal highness's mind were obviated by Mr. Ireland.

A JUST TRIBUTE OF PRAISE TO MRS. J*RD*N.

As the agreement for the Vortigern and Rowena was then on the point of being signed between Mr. Samuel Ireland, as my guardian, and the managers of Drury Lane theatre, much conversation took place upon that subject; in the course of which his royal highness was so kind as to give Mr. Samuel Ireland many cautious hints.—Respecting the language of the piece, as well as the plot and characters, numerous inquiries were made by Mrs. J*rd*n, as well as the duke of Clarence: and I think it but justice in this place to offer my sincere thanks to that lady for her kind endeavours on a subsequent occasion, when she had to sustain one of the principal characters in the drama.—I also beg leave to state that I shall be ever mindful of her particular kindness and

affability during the visit made to his royal highness; as also for her complacency and condescension during my long continuance in the green-room of Drury Lane theatre on the night of the representation of my play, when not only her transcendent abilities as an actress were exerted in my behalf before the curtain, but reanimating expressions, whilst in the green-room, continually flowed from her lips, in order to rouse me from the mental depression under which I so obviously laboured on that momentous occasion.

SEARCHES AFTER THE SUPPOSED GENTLEMAN.

As it was supposed, in consequence of my statements before mentioned, that some unknown gentleman was the original donor of the papers, the inquiries that were set on foot in order to his discovery were incalculable: neither was I forgotten in my walks; for as it was supposed that I must have constant meetings with him, it was imagined, that, by tracing my steps, the residence of my mysterious friend

must be discovered: which would have undoubtedly proved the case, had there been any such being in existence: but the whole concentrating in myself, and it being conjectured, on account of my youth, that I never could be the fabricator, little notice was taken of me when at chambers, where the whole was executed. If, on the contrary, such steps had been taken, I must have been discovered; as by picking the lock of a window-seat the whole of my apparatus would have been displayed to view. I must here state, that towards the termination of the business, when doubts ran very high respecting the authenticity of the manuscripts, I destroyed an infinite number of unfinished papers then in my possession, that no document might appear in evidence against me.

MR. C*L*Y.

This gentleman, who is well known as an excellent judge of ancient manuscripts, and who is perfectly well enabled to decipher with ease the most abbrevirted docu-

ments, the productions of centuries back, was a frequent inspector of my manuscripts; and although he in many instances raised objections to the papers, he nevertheless did upon the whole conceive them the productions of the period to which I ascribed them. Before stating thus much, however, I should have premised that Mr. C*l*y inspected them merely as a judge of the paper, parchment, and general appearance of ancient documents, without any regard to the language or particular history of the stage during the period of William Shakspeare.

THE LATE MR. RITSON.

Of the numerous individuals who came to inspect the manuscripts, no one excited my fear so much as the above gentleman, whose keen penetration is by no means unknown to the sapient Mr. Malone, on whose abilities as a commentator he has so fully expatiated as to render him contemptible where he conceives himself deserving of universal panegyric.

The sharp physiognomy, the piercing eye, and the silent scrutiny, of Mr. Ritson, filled me with a dread I had never before experienced. His questionings were laconic, but always to the purpose. No studied flow of words could draw him from his purpose: he was not to be hoodwinked: and after satisfying his curiosity, he departed from Mr. Samuel Ireland's house, without delivering any opinion, or committing himself in the smallest circumstance. In fine, I do as firmly believe that Mr. Ritson went away fully assured that the papers were spurious, as that I have existence at this moment.

THE LATE MR. GEORGE STEEVENS.

This gentleman, whose memory will be handed down to posterity as long as commentaries on Shakspeare exist, followed his usual mode of conduct with respect to the fabricated manuscripts: he did not boldly enter the lists; but, like a mole, worked in secret; and, when occasion served, stung with the subtlety of a viper.—Whether this

gentleman lent his friendly aid to Mr. Malone, in the course of his Inquiry, I will not pretend to say, though I rather conceive, that upon that occasion, the rival commentators, like the two kings of Brentford, "smelt at one nosegay," and buried their private feelings in the general attempt to crush that which would have proved so many of their labours of non effect had it passed current with the world.

MY RIGHT TO THE PAPERS DISPUTED.

When the multiplicity of the papers became an object of wonder, it was stated, by some of the visitants at Mr. Samuel Ireland's house, that, if a descendant of Shakspeare could be found, he might lay claim to all the papers which I had produced.—Astonished at this information, I began to think of some method which might obviate any such step being put into effect, even should a claimant appear; as I conceived it would be hard indeed that my own productions should go into the hands of an utter stranger. After

many thoughts upon this subject, I had recourse to the following expedient.

PRELUDE TO THE CLAIMING WHAT WAS MY OWN.

Shortly after the above statement, I produced some documents tending to prove that Shakspeare had been very closely connected with a person of the name of Ireland; and so very unguarded was I upon this occasion, as to make the Christian names of the supposed Ireland similar to my own, being William-Henry. These papers tended to prove that our bard laboured under some weighty obligation to my namesake; whilst others were penned in the most familiar style. And by these means I began to pave the way to my *rightful claim* to my own productions.

CHRISTIAN NAMES WILLIAM-HENRY.

In addition to the folly of my having affixed precisely my own Christian names to the sirname of the Ireland supposed to have been so intimately connected with our bard, it afterwards appeared that the

assumption of two Christian names was scarcely ever used in the days of Shakspeare, and that only in cases of persons of the very first rank. Being on this occasion, as on many others, wholly unacquainted with the necessary facts, I had unthinkingly rushed into an error at which Mr. Malone has levelled his envenomed shaft with his usual rancour.

DELINEATION OF THE ARMS OF SHAKSPEARE AND IRELAND.

On one of the documents relative to Shakspeare and Ireland I inserted a rude pen-and-ink drawing of the armorial bearings of our bard and those of the Ireland family, which I joined together with a chain, inserting these words in the centre:

Neverre toe parte
butte inne deathe.

Which trivial circumstance gave rise to the attempt at an heraldic *achievement* which will be found, with the other *curiosa*, in the engraved sheet prefixed to this work.

JUNCTION OF THE ARMS OF SHAKSPEARE AND IRELAND.

As sir Is**c H**rd and Mr. T*wns*nd were frequent visitants in Norfolk Street, they suggested to Mr. Samuel Ireland, on account of the apparent connexion between the families of Shakspeare and Ireland, that a junction of the two coats-of-arms should take place; and that Mr. S. Ireland ought to couple on his own shield the bearings of Shakspeare. To give an adequate idea of my feelings on this occasion, is utterly impossible. I shall therefore content myself with the insertion of the succeeding lines, which were committed to paper on that momentous occasion.

HASTY EFFUSION UPON AN HERALDIC SUBJECT.

Sir Is**c ran, but where the Lord knows,
Pulling up his black plush small-clothes:
And T*wns*nd, knight of herald school,
In *argent* vers'd, and *or*, and *gule;*
Who could the pedigrees unravel
Of chieftains at the Tower of Babel;

MAHARAJA SERFOGI'S SARA

And tell by whom, and where, and why
His lordship sprang from bastardy;
Or if Bill Shakspeare us'd to stray
From gentle dame Anne Hathaway;
Or souse in Thames, but not like witches,
Be drown'd—for he was caught by breeches;
By which hard griping of the hand
Our bard was sav'd by this Ireland,
Which joins the spear and flower de luces
And saves from fraud and vile abuses,
Those relics, which by this appear,
To 'long to Ireland, not Shakspeare.

GRANT OF ARMS TO IRELAND.

Having heard it asserted that the arms of the Ireland family, which consist of six *fleurs de lis*, upon a ground *gules*, were gained at the ever-memorable battle of Agincourt, I wished if possible to execute the original grant, and for that purpose called on Mr. Thane; to whom I mentioned a supposition that such a document was in existence, with the signature of Henry the Fifth. Upon hearing which, Mr. Thane said that such a document would be a matter of great curiosity, as no signature of that monarch had been discovered. I made several attempts to

compass this point, but found the execution too arduous: and fearing also that it might be discovered if not properly managed, I abandoned the idea; fully aware that the disclosure of one fabrication, at that stage of the business, must have infallibly overthrown the Shaksperian mass already produced.

DEED OF GIFT TO WILLIAM-HENRY IRELAND.

A bold document, executed by myself to substantiate my claim to my own productions, was a supposed deed of gift from Shakspeare to maister William-Henry Ireland; part of the contents of which are alluded to in the poetic lines last given. In this instrument, which was engrossed on parchment, and regularly sealed, like the foregoing law documents, I accounted for the friendship that subsisted between our bard and Ireland, by stating that Shakspeare's life had been saved by the exertions of my ancestor, when, being in a boat upon the river Thames, through the intoxication of the watermen, the bark was

unfortunatly upset. For this service the bequests contained in the deed were supposed to have been made. But that the public may be better enabled to form a judgement upon the subject, I shall give the following statement, taken literally from the spurious document in question.

QUOTATION FROM THE DEED OF GIFT.

" Whereas onne or abowte the thyrde daye of the laste monethe beyng the monethe of *Auguste* havynge withe mye goode freynde masterre William Henrye Irelande ande otherres taen boate neare untowe myne howse afowersayde wee didde purpose goynge upp Thames butte those thatte were soe to conducte us beying muche toe merrye throughe lyquorre theye did upsette oure fowersayde bayrge all butte myeselfe savedd themselves bye swimmyng for though the waterre was deepe yette owre beynge close nygh toe shore made itte lyttel dyffyculte for them knowinge the fowersayde arte masterre William Henrye Irelande notte seeynge mee dydd aske for mee butte owne of the companye dydd answerre thatte I was drownynge onn the whyche hee pulledd off hys jerrekynne and jumpedd inn afterre mee withe much paynes he draggedd mee forthe I beynge then nearlye deade and soe he dydd save mye life and for the whyche I doe herebye give hym as folowithe" &c.

MY OWN MANUSCRIPTS PROVED TO BE MY OWN RIGHT.

In addition to the deed of gift, I ventured to make the following assertion, which I conceived would infallibly preclude an attempt to deprive me of my own productions by transferring them to any descendant of Shakspeare who might be disposed to urge a claim.

I informed Mr. Samuel Ireland, that, on research being made among the family papers of the unknown Mr. H, he had discovered documents tending to prove that I was the direct descendant of the William-Henry Ireland to whom the bequest was made in the deed of gift; and that consequently he no longer regarded my possession of the manuscripts as a favour, but looked upon them as my own right by descent.

This was not, however, the last law document which I deemed necessary; and in consequence produced the law instrument which will occupy the following head, and which was fabricated very shortly after the deed of

gift, in order to account for a very material objection constantly raised in opposition to the validity of the manuscripts.

DEED OF TRUST TO JOHN HEMINGES.

Notwithstanding Mr. Malone has so amply expatiated on the various bequests contained in this fabricated document, he has nevertheless totally mistaken the real purport for which the instrument was composed, and which I shall now proceed to declare.

As I had, with Mr. Talbot, adopted the letter *H* as the initial of my friend's sirname, it was instantly conjectured that his name must be *Heminges*, and that he was the representative of the person bearing that name who was so closely connected with our bard. Yet it still remained unceasingly a matter of astonishment that this gentleman should desire so scrupulously to conceal his name, and not avow himself to be the original possessor of the papers. At once to still surmises on this score, was the law document now under consideration

produced; for the inference which I looked would be drawn from it was, that the ancestors of my friend (now concluded to be a *Heminges*) had not discharged the bequests made in this deed; and that, in consequence, my friend was averse from casting an odium on them, and of affixing an implied stigma on himself, by a disclosure of his name and connexions.

Besides these conclusions, which tended to account satisfactorily for the rigid silence of the supposed original proprietor of the manuscripts, it was also conjectured, that to the care of the same Heminges the deed of gift to Ireland had been entrusted; the clauses of which he had been equally dilatory in fulfilling: so that the property originally left to the Ireland of the time of Shakspeare, having remained in the family of the Heminges for so long a period, was at length thus providentially restored to the lineal descendant of him who had saved our poet's life, by the existing representative of his supposed nefarious ancestor.

GATHERING OF A STORM.

I shall now pass over a considerable period of time, during which my mind was unceasingly harassed by the constant reproaches of Mr. Ireland (who was then regarded in the light of the fabricator of the papers), and the importunate interrogatories of his friends; who stated, that it was a duty incumbent on me to give up the name of any unknown friend, in order to clear my father's character from the odium which was so unjustly heaped upon it. Having no name to bring forward, I of course evaded these reiterated entreaties by a statement of the grounds upon which the papers had originally fallen into my hands, and the manner in which Mr. Samuel Ireland had embarked in the publication of them. This, however, was not sufficient: the clamour increased daily; and a committee of several gentlemen was called to investigate the matter, and hear my answers, publicly delivered, to every interrogatory that might be put.

Mr. Talbot, who had also forwarded the letter before mentioned to Mr. Ireland, joining in my account of the discovery of the manuscripts (as agreed between us), was at this period written to by Mr. Ireland in a peremptory manner, in order to his forwarding from Dublin the correct statement of every circumstance, together with the supposed concealed gentleman's name, place of abode, &c. To such applications, however, Mr. Talbot continued silent, leaving every thing to myself (having been sufficiently harassed by the part he had formerly taken), in order as he conceived to befriend me, without having any other motive whatsoever in view.

THE COMMITTEE.

At this first meeting of the gentlemen appointed to canvass the whole production of the Shaksperian mass, I was of course present; when a regular series of questions were put to me; to each of which I replied by adhering to the story first delivered to the public. It was then demanded

of me whether I would make oath, "that, to the best of my knowledge and belief (from every circumstance I knew respecting the discovery of the papers), they were genuine manuscripts from the pen of Shakspeare."

To this interrogatory I made the following reply :—

"It is stated that the present committee is appointed to investigate Mr. Samuel Ireland's concern in the business, and ease him from the calumnies which are heaped upon his head; I therefore will make oath that he received the papers from me as Shakspeare's, and knows nothing whatsoever concerning their origin, or the source from whence they came."

Such was the purport of the business transacted during the first meeting.

SECOND MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE.

At this second investigation I was also present; when Mr. Montague Talbot's letter to Mr. Ireland, giving the detail of the discovery of the papers at Mr. H's, was

read aloud, as well as the copies of such communications as had been made to Mr. Talbot in Dublin, by Mr. Ireland, since his receipt of the above, of which Mr. Ireland had kept copies.

Mr. Talbot's silence having been much reprobated by the gentlemen present, recourse was again had to me; when numerous propositions were made and interrogatories put; to all of which I replied as usual; stating, that my solemn oath compelled me never to reveal the name of the donor of the manuscripts, unless I had his previous permission to cancel the obligation by which I had so bound myself.

THE LATE GOVERNOR FR*NKL*N.

This gentleman was one of the persons appointed to attend these committees. Having heard me so peremptorily insist on the obligation of an oath, he arose from his seat, and, taking a Bible from his pocket, proceeded to quote several passages from Holy Writ, in order to prove

that no son being under age was called upon to adhere to an oath, when the character of his parent was implicated by his so doing. I cannot now call to mind the particular verses read aloud by the above gentleman on that occasion; but I well remember that the generality of his auditors regarded his conduct rather as the impulse of passion, than the offspring of cool reason and common sense.

LIST OF NAMES MADE OUT FOR THE SUPPOSED UNKNOWN GENTLEMAN.

It was, I believe, at the second meeting of the committee above mentioned that it was proposed to me to deliver into the hands of my supposed unknown friend a list of the names of several gentlemen, in order that he might, if he should think fit, select two persons to whom he would confide every fact respecting himself and the manuscripts. To this proposition I assented; when several names were committed to paper, and delivered into my

hands, in order to be given to the unknown Mr. H; a future day being then appointed for receiving his answer.

This proposition was made under the following presumption; that, although the supposed unknown gentleman might not be prevailed upon, by the two persons who should attend him, to make himself publicly known; yet that they, being individuals of respectability and fortune, might, upon ascertaining the facts, declare their opinions solemnly to the world, according to the statement that should be laid before them, and the proofs adduced; which would not only establish or invalidate the papers, but also free Mr. Ireland from any invidious remark which the world might otherwise be disposed to make on his connexion with the fabricator of the manuscripts.

SELECTION OF THE TWO GENTLEMEN.

As my mind was at this period a prey to the most agonising disquietudes, I debated within myself whether it would not

be preferable to reveal the whole transaction to such two gentlemen as I chose to select, and consult with them as to the line of conduct it was most incumbent upon me to pursue, rather than longer remain in that state of dreadful anxiety, which rendered my existence burdensome to me. Having at length made up my mind to brave the worst, I affixed a mark opposite those gentlemens' names from whom I had the least cause to expect harsh conduct on making my confession; and, on the day appointed, I delivered in the list to the committee, with the two names so selected by myself; at which all the gentlemen appeared perfectly well satisfied: and a fourth day was in consequence named—it being agreed, that, during the intervening period, the persons so selected by me should be applied to, in order to know whether or not they were willing to become depositories of the great secret.—It is here requisite to mention, that the names of the gentlemen so chosen have now altogether escaped my memory.

APPOINTMENT OF MR. WALLIS TO BECOME THE DEPOSITORY OF MY SECRET.

On the appointed day the committee again assembled; when it was declared the gentlemen whom I had chosen had declined the *honour* intended them, and refused to interfere in the business. A long altercation ensued; after which I informed the company, that, if Mr. Albany Wallis (who was then present) would take upon himself the charge of the secret, I did not doubt that I could prevail upon my friend to confide the whole matter to him. Mr. Wallis having acceded to this proposal, I acquainted the committee that I should take the earliest opportunity of persuading my friend to comply with my wishes; after which I would communicate to Mr. Albany Wallis the day and hour when he might expect Mr. H to make the discovery so long and ardently called for by the public.

CONFESSION MADE TO MR. WALLIS.

Having summoned sufficient resolution, I repaired to Mr. Albany Wallis on the second day after the above meeting of the committee, when I explicitly detailed to that gentleman every circumstance attending my fabrication of the Shaksperian manuscripts. Mr. Wallis was infinitely astonished at the discovery, and immediately proceeded to inquire my reasons for embarking in the variety of papers produced; when I committed to paper, in the disguised hand, my explicit reply to all his interrogatories, with which he was fully satisfied.

At a subsequent meeting I delivered into Mr. Wallis's hands the remains of my ink used in the fabrication, as also the plans of several plays, with various other documents, as collateral proofs of the veracity of my confession.

ADVICE OF MR. WALLIS, AND HIS DETERMINATION.

On consulting Mr. Wallis as to the steps most expedient for me to adopt, he requested me to continue silent as usual; and that, with respect to himself, he should evade any questionings which might be put to him upon the subject, by stating that it was his opinion, as a professional man, that the supposed gentleman was not exactly safe in committing his name to the public; and with regard to inquiries made respecting the validity of the papers, Mr. Wallis determined on maintaining the most rigid silence.

RENEWAL OF PERSECUTION.

As Mr. Malone and his inveterate phalanx still continued their invidious aspersions against the character of Mr. Samuel Ireland, who was unceasingly paragraphed in the morning prints, &c.; and as my communication of every circumstance to Mr. Wallis did not tend to elucidate the mystery, notwithstanding Mr. Samuel Ire-

land's frequent applications to that gentleman, Mr. Ireland again recurred to me; and I was, as before, subject to the unceasing and bitter reproof of himself and friends for still subjecting him to the ill-natured suggestions of the world. All my arguments in opposition to these reiterated complainings were vain; and about this period Mr. Samuel Ireland quitted London, in order to experience a degree of tranquillity with some old friends who had given him an invitation into Berkshire.

PAINFUL RETROSPECTION.

A short time after Mr. Samuel Ireland's departure from London I received the following letter, the contents of which struck deep into my soul; and I from that period more bitterly cursed the fatal moment which involved me in a business fraught with misery to myself, and which had caused an incalculable degree of unhappiness to that being whom I had fondly hoped to gratify by the production of the manuscripts.

MR. S. IRELAND'S LETTER.

"It is now more than a week, my dear Sam, since I left London; and not a word or a line from you!—In the situation, unsettled as you are, you cannot suppose but that my mind is much agitated, both on your account and that of the family.

"I expected, according to your promise, that you would certainly have written to me, and have pointed out what was your plan: and not only so, but your intentions with regard to the papers. I do assure you my state is truly wretched on both accounts. I have no rest, either night or day; which might be much alleviated by a more open and candid conduct on your side. Surely, if there is a person for whom you can for a moment feel, it must be for a parent who has never ceased to render you every comfort and attention, from your earliest moment of existence to the present.

"I think you must sometimes reflect, and place yourself in imagination as at a future period of life,—having a son and being in such a predicament as I stand at present; and then judging what must be *your state of mind*, and what must be *mine at present*.

"I do not mean reproaches by this letter, but to assure you, that, if you cannot think me your friend, I fear you will be deceived in all friendships you may in future form. I do not recollect that any conduct of mine towards you has been other than that of a friend and companion—not that of a rigid or morose parent. It is therefore doubly unnatural that I should be forced to apply for information through any channel whatsoever, when I ought to hear it voluntarily from yourself.

"You seem to be estranging yourself, not only from me, but from all your family and all my acquaintances. Reflect well what you do, and what determinations you make; for this is the moment that may in all probability render you comfortable in your future establishment and future situation, or make you an alien to happiness for ever.

"I have heard of my situation with the world, as to the papers at Reading, from many gentlemen there; who all agree that my state is truly a pitiable one; and all seem to dread the event. I know not the nature of your oaths and engagements, nor does the world; but it is universally allowed, that no obligation should lead a parent into ruin.

"If the papers are to be established as genuine, why delay to furnish me with *the documents so lately promised?*——But I will say no more on the subject at present.

"By a paragraph in the Sun of Thursday last, it should appear, that, though I am not in the secret, some persons are. The paragraph runs thus:

"'We are at length enabled to form a *decisive opinion* with regard to the manuscripts in the possession of Mr. Ireland, though motives of delicacy at present prevent us from rendering that opinion public!'

"Pray give me a line by to-morrow's post, as I am impatient to hear from you: and believe me your very sincere friend and affectionate father,

"SAMUEL IRELAND."

"June 5th: Sunday."

WHY FAMILIARLY CALLED SAM BY MR. IRELAND.

As in the above letter Mr. Ireland addresses me by the name of Sam, in order that no fresh mysteries may arise in the public mind, after my having stated that my names are William-Henry, I think it requisite to inform my readers that I had an elder brother baptized Samuel, after Mr. Ireland; who dying when young, the names William Henry, by which I was christened, were never adopted by Mr. Ireland, who rather chose to call me after his own name, I being then his only remaining male offspring.

DOCUMENTS INTENDED TO HAVE BEEN PRODUCED.

The papers required by Mr. Ireland, and upon the promise of which he lays a stress in his letter, were numerous other documents, of which I had given in a list as existing among the supposed manuscripts, and which it was my full intention to have fabricated, in order to throw a

greater degree of validity on the mass already produced, had not the overthrow of the whole business ensued, and frustrated any further attempts.

PRECIPITATE RESOLUTION.

The painful train of reflexions which occupied my thoughts in consequence of the letter just quoted, and the anxiety which pervaded Mr. Samuel Ireland's mind, led me to have recourse to an expedient which the momentary pressure could alone have warranted. Finding that no step could satisfy Mr. Ireland's anxiety but the disclosure of the whole fact to himself, and fearful of confiding the same to his ear, I resolutely determined on quitting his mansion for ever, as my life was an absolute burden to me under existing circumstances; in addition to which, the very method required by Mr. Ireland to quiet his doubts (which was my publication of every fact relating to the manuscripts, as above stated) was, to make

use of a trite adage, a remedy worse than the disease.

DEPARTURE FROM NORFOLK STREET.

Having worked up my mind to the adoption of the above plan, I made a hasty package of such articles as I could conveniently place within a carriage; when, seizing the opportunity of all the family's being from home, I dispatched one of the servants for a hackney coach, and bade adieu to that residence which a series of events, originating in no evil intention whatsoever, had for many months rendered painful to me.

MR. IRELAND'S RETURN FROM BERKSHIRE.

Shortly after my precipitate retreat, Mr. Samuel Ireland returned to town, being infinitely astonished at the news of my departure from Norfolk Street. He immediately repaired to Mr. Albany Wallis, with whom I had had frequent interviews; but that gentleman, conformably to my re-

quest, concealed the place of my abode, and also preserved the most inviolable secresy as to every thing which bore the least relation to my confession respecting the manuscripts.—Upon one of Mr. Samuel Ireland's attendances on that gentleman, the following message was left for me in writing; it having been previously determined that an affidavit should be drawn up, and sworn to, in order to exculpate Mr. Ireland from having had any concern whatsoever in fabricating the papers; which was the rumour after they were generally deemed fabrications by the world, although the precise fact had not at that period met the public view; being confined to Mr. Wallis, as before stated.

MESSAGE LEFT BY MR. IRELAND.

"That I insist on having the affidavit drawn up by Sam, and signed and sworn before a magistrate, in order to its being sent to Talbot, and then to be laid before the public: and I likewise insist on having

the remainder of the papers, so often promised me."

ANXIETY ON MR. IRELAND'S ACCOUNT.

As the only object I had in view was the total exculpation of Mr. Samuel Ireland from having been connected in the fabrication (Mr. Albany Wallis having given it as his decided opinion that no blame would attach itself to me, as a boy, for having written the manuscripts, whereas Mr. Ireland's character, as a man in years, and established in the world, would suffer from the suggestion, as it would be inferred that the whole had been executed by him for the purpose of gain), I requested Mr. A. Wallis to draw out a proper affidavit, in order to my swearing to the same and its after insertion in the public prints; with which request Mr. Wallis willingly complied; when the following was the form of the oath to be administered on that occasion, as drawn out by the above gentleman.

AFFIDAVIT DRAWN OUT BY A. WALLIS, ESQ.

"In justice to my father, and to remove the odium under which he labours respecting the papers published by him as the manuscripts of Shakspeare, I do hereby solemnly declare, that they were given to him by me as the manuscripts of Shakspeare, and that he was totally ignorant and unacquainted with the source from whence they came, or with any matter relating to the same, or to any thing save what was told him by myself; and that he published them without any knowledge, or even the smallest intention of fraud or imposition, but under a firm belief and persuasion of their authenticity, as I had given him to understand they were so.

"W. H. IRELAND."

"17th January, 1796."

DISSATISFACTION OF MR. IRELAND.

Although Mr. Albany Wallis conceived the above affidavit in every respect adequate to answer the end required, it was nevertheless deemed insufficient by Mr. Samuel Ireland; who still dwelt on the hardship of not being made a participator with Mr. Wallis in the fatal mystery respecting the manuscripts. No arguments adduced by Mr. Wallis were sufficient to

pacify Mr. Ireland on that head: and it was, I believe, solely on this account that the affidavit in question was never required to be sworn to by me, or inserted in the public newspapers, notwithstanding the reiterated entreaties of Mr. A. Wallis and myself on that head.

PRESSING LETTER FROM MR. IRELAND TO MR. TALBOT.

On a prior occasion, and to the best of my recollection during the meetings of the committees, several very urgent letters were forwarded by Mr. Ireland to Mr. Talbot (then in Dublin), in order to draw from him a similar confirmation by oath to that required of me by the committee—*viz.*, "That, to the best of his knowledge and belief, he thought the manuscripts the real productions of Shakspeare."—These communications of course had no effect: after which the form of the request was changed, though tending precisely to the same purport, being fully explained under the following head.

MR. TALBOT'S AFFIDAVIT REQUIRED.

In one of the letters so dispatched to Mr. Talbot by Mr. S. Ireland, he requested to know whether Mr. Talbot had any objection to make an affidavit as to the truth of the contents of his letter forwarded to Mr. Ireland, in which he gave the account of the discovery of the manuscripts, as agreed upon between Mr. Talbot and myself. In answer to this, Mr. Talbot replied, that, if I would first enter into the oath, he would also swear that no individual, except ourselves and the supposed Mr. H, knew the secret.—In this instance Mr. Talbot was perfectly secure, being well aware, that, as there was no such person in existence as Mr. H, I could not enter into an oath whereby I would have been guilty of perjury. Upon my consequent refusal, I need scarcely add that all the blame was thrown upon me by Mr. Ireland: and upon several applications being afterwards made in order to Mr. Talbot's singly entering into such an affidavit, he constantly

refused; actuated, I conjecture, by similar motives to those which deterred me.

CONFESSION OF THE FACT TO MR. IRELAND BY LETTER.

As every endeavour to calm Mr. Samuel Ireland's mind proved futile, I consulted Mr. Albany Wallis on the expediency of dispatching a letter to him averring myself the author of the manuscripts, and referring him for further satisfaction to Mr. Albany Wallis: to which suggestion Mr. Wallis agreed; and I in consequence penned a very long epistle to Mr. Ireland, stating the whole transaction, and craving his pardon in the most submissive terms for the error I had committed and the trouble I had thus unintentionally caused him. This communication, being approved of by Mr. Wallis, was immediately forwarded to Mr. Samuel Ireland for his perusal.

TANJORE MAHARAJA SERFOGI'S SARASWATI MAHAL.

MR. IRELAND'S INCREDULITY.

The effect produced by this letter was diametrically opposite to what Mr. Wallis had conjectured, although I was by no means astonished at the impression thereby made on Mr. Samuel Ireland's mind; who instantly attended on Mr. Wallis, stating it as his firm belief that there was not a word of truth in my statement; that he still believed the papers genuine; that no set of men could have produced the mass of evidence then in his possession; and that with respect to my assuming the title of author of the manuscripts, he was as fully convinced as that he then had existence I never could have produced them.—It was in vain that Mr. Wallis argued the point, and endeavoured to convince Mr. Ireland that I had not deceived him by the confession in my letter: he would not be pacified, nor examine the similar hand-writing of the documents then in Mr. Wallis's possession: and, still

adhering to his own belief, he quitted Mr. Wallis, firmly maintaining that the manuscripts were indisputably the productions of William Shakspeare.

DETERMINATION TO PUBLISH A STATEMENT OF FACTS.

As the fact, when stated, would not be accredited by Mr. Samuel Ireland, I was at a loss what step should be taken; for he still maintained his former belief, and constantly demanded of me the manuscripts which had been promised as forthcoming previous to my confession of the whole transaction. Thus circumstanced, I once more consulted Mr. Albany Wallis; giving it as my opinion that the only means of exculpating Mr. Samuel Ireland from any censure whatsoever, would be my publication of a pamphlet stating concisely every fact. With this opinion Mr. Wallis did not coincide; advising me rather to suffer the matter to die away than give such a testimony to the public.

What was to be done in this posture of

affairs? Mr. Samuel Ireland still believed the papers genuine; he demanded the remainder, which had been promised; he exhorted me to confess the truth, which, though already made known, he would not believe; and, lastly, he peremptorily insisted on my clearing his character to the world from every aspersion which had been thrown upon it. Tormented by the reflexion that whilst I remained silent my father's character bore undeservedly an offensive stigma, and knowing no better mode to free him from censure than that which I had suggested, I determined to act in opposition to the advice of Mr. Wallis, and give to the world a concise statement of the facts.

PUBLICATION OF THE PAMPHLET.

No sooner was this resolution formed than I committed to paper, in the most laconic manner possible, the leading particulars of the fabrication, which were published, in a pamphlet consisting of forty-three pages, under the following title:

"An
Authentic Account
of the
Shaksperian Manuscripts, &c.
By W. H. Ireland."

RARITY OF THE PAMPHLET.

Of the above publication, which was sold at one shilling, only five hundred copies were printed: and so rare have they now become, that a single impression of the pamphlet has been known to sell, in a sale-room, for the sum of *one guinea*. The only copy now in my possession is deficient in one leaf; and for this very mutilated impression I was compelled to pay eighteen shillings; being given to understand, at the time of purchasing the same, that I was favoured in its sale at that price, because I was the author of the production.

VINDICATION OF MY PAMPHLET.

After the publication of my pamphlet, it was boldly asserted, by all the believers in the manuscripts, that the individual who had written it could never have been the

author of the language to be found throughout the Shaksperian productions. In answer to this, my reply is, that the then unsettled state of my mind incapacitated me even from thinking coolly on any subject. I may further add, that I was not endeavouring to commit blank verse to paper: neither was it requisite for me to soar into the "heaven of heavens," in order to give the world "a plain unvarnish'd tale." The pamphlet was the production of perturbed moments, and contained facts as repugnant to my feelings as they could be to the most strenuous advocate for the papers. With all its imperfections, let its object be remembered: it was committed to the press for the most laudable of purposes,—to remove the odium which was unjustly heaped upon the innocent: and however I may have since been, by many, condemned for this procedure, I still conceive that it was the only method left me of compassing the desired end; and as such, my conscience does not upbraid me.

A SECOND LETTER FORWARDED TO MR. S. IRELAND.

Some time after the publication of my pamphlet, Mr. Samuel Ireland still adhering to his former opinions, and being myself well acquainted with the objections raised by many against the style of my pamphlet, I forwarded a further explanatory epistle to Mr. Samuel Ireland, detailing every fact which might tend to undeceive him in his erroneous suggestions, and vindicating the contents of my publication, which had greatly exasperated him. A portion of the letter alluded to, of which I retained a transcript, being applicable to the present topic, I shall insert under the ensuing head, that the reader may be enabled to form a truer judgement upon the subject.

QUOTATION FROM MY SECOND LETTER TO MR. IRELAND.

——— That I have been guilty of a fault in giving you the manuscripts, I confess, and am sorry for it; but must at the same time assure you, that it was done

without a bad intention, or even a thought of what would ensue.

As you have repeatedly stated that "truth will find its basis;" even so will your *character*, notwithstanding every malignant aspersion, soon appear unblemished in the eyes of the world.

I must also appeal to the above expression: and although the style of my pamphlet may, when compared with my Vortigern, Henry the Second, &c., appear to be the production of a different person, and for the present confirm the public in the opinion that I am not the author of the papers; yet, sir, I do most solemnly appeal to my God that a day must come when the contents of my pamphlet will be allowed; and thereby never-erring "truth will find its basis."

I am extremely sorry you did not, before the publication of your book, inspect the papers which I left in Mr. Wallis's possession, and which I now beg you will no longer delay examining, as they contain a similar account to that published in my pamphlet. I make this remark, as your statement throws a degree of mystery on the transaction, which may give the world an idea of some different and concealed statement being in the hands of Mr. Wallis.

EXPLANATORY OF A SENTENCE IN MY SECOND LETTER TO MR. IRELAND.

A considerable time after the appearance of my confession, Mr. Samuel Ireland produced a pamphlet in vindication of his

own character: in one part of which he insinuates that other documents were placed in the hands of Mr. A. Wallis of Norfolk Street than those mentioned by me. This statement induced me in my letter to request that Mr. Ireland would no longer delay to satisfy himself on that head, as the casting of such a doubt upon the subject tended to invalidate the statement of facts given to the public in my pamphlet. The particular words made use of by Mr. Ireland, in his Vindication, I cannot now call to mind, nor am I in possession of the work in question; but the sentence, I well recollect, was intended to convey the idea of an inexplicable mystery overhung the documents vested in the hands of Mr. A. Wallis.

FINAL STATEMENT RESPECTING MR. M. TALBOT.

I should not forget to state, that on the morning my pamphlet was published I forwarded a letter to Mr. Montague Talbot, expressive of the disquietudes I had

suffered and the steps I had been compelled to adopt, and altogether exonerating him from the promise of secresy made to me on a prior occasion. In the same communication I requested his pardon for the painful dilemma in which I had involved him, by requesting his participation in the story respecting the discovery of the papers. To this letter Mr. M. Talbot wrote me a very friendly answer: nor can I close this last statement respecting that gentleman, without once more offering him my sincere thanks for the inviolable secresy he preserved, and his generous interposition in my favour whensoever he conceived that his assistance would prove beneficial to me.

A GOOD HIT.

In the Morning Chronicle was inserted one of the most sarcastic remarks that appeared during the whole of the Shaksperian controversy. The paragraph which contained it appeared immediately after

W. H. Ireland's confession of his being the writer of the manuscripts. It ran nearly as follows:

"W. H. Ireland has come forward and announced himself author of the papers attributed by him to Shakspeare; which, if *true*, proves him to be a *liar*."

CHARGE ADDUCED AGAINST MR. A. WALLIS.

Several months after the production of my explanatory pamphlet, Mr. Albany Wallis was given to understand that Mr. Samuel Ireland attributed to him all the blame which he attached to that publication, and that he was also desirous I should retract the whole of its contents. In consequence of this statement, and in order to justify his own conduct, Mr. Wallis dispatched a note, requesting to see me. I attended; and upon hearing Mr. Wallis's detail of the affair, I instantly committed the following lines to paper, in justification of the conduct of that gentleman on the occasion.

MAHARAJA SERFOGI'S SARASWATI ... TANJORE

REFUTATION OF THE CHARGE AGAINST MR. WALLIS.

Dear sir,

Having heard, from very good authority, that Mr. S. Ireland is desirous I should retract a part, if not the whole, of my pamphlet, and wishing moreover that I should mention you as the person who urged me to bring it forward, I think it but just that I should contradict such an assertion, and declare, that, very far from instigating me to the business, you rather wished me to remain totally silent, and suffer the affair "*to die away*,"—such being frequently your expression. Yet, notwithstanding such advice, I rather chose to come forward with the truth than suffer the world to continue in ignorance.

I remain, dear sir, &c.,

W. H. IRELAND.

January 31, 1797.

MR. SAMUEL IRELAND'S PREJUDICE.

As a proof of the persecuting spirit which was unceasingly displayed to my detriment, I may mention that the warm emotions of the heart were discarded by Mr. Ireland, who dreaded any connexion whatsoever with me; fearful lest the world should brand him with countenancing me, and thereby be led to infer that he had been secretly concerned in the fabrication

of the manuscripts. In the advertisement to the play of Henry the Second, published by Mr. Barker of Russel Street (*vide* p. 3), appear, in italics, the following words of Mr. Samuel Ireland.

QUOTATION FROM MR. IRELAND'S ADVERTISEMENT TO HENRY THE SECOND.

"That he" (Mr. S. Ireland) "has had no intercourse or communication with the cause of all this public and domestic misfortune for near three years—the period at which the party alluded to quitted his house—except one meeting, had at the request and in the presence of Mr. Albany Wallis of Norfolk Street."

TWO OF SHAKSPEARE'S LETTERS DISCOVERED AT KNOLE IN KENT.

It has been stated in the public prints, and I conjecture with truth, that two letters from the pen of Shakspeare were discovered some time since at Knole in Kent, among the papers of the Dorset family, written by our bard to the then lord-chamberlain upon mere official business relative to theatrical matters. This circumstance has frequently led me to conjecture what would have proved the con-

sequence supposing that my manuscripts had passed current, and that upon comparison they had been found altogether dissimilar to the penmanship contained in the two letters in question. A second controversy would doubtless have proved the case, when

"Critics anew had vented all their rage,
And gall, in ebon streams, imbu'd the page."

THE FOREIGN GENTLEMAN AND LAVATER THE PHYSIOGNOMIST.

I beg leave to premise, ere I proceed with the subject of this head, that I do not insert the following statement to sooth a self-complacence, nor because I have confidence in the physiognomical principles of Lavater. The anecdote (which is positively true) is given solely because of its singularity.

After having quitted my father's house, I was frequently invited to —— Thompson's, esq., M. P. On one particular occasion he introduced me at dinner to a foreign gentleman, who had frequently heard

of the Shaksperian fabrication, and who was a staunch adherent to the principles of Lavater the physiognomist. Some time after the cloth was withdrawn, the above gentleman having riveted his eyes upon my face for a considerable time, at length replenished his glass, and, after drinking my health, addressed himself to Mr. Thompson, stating that he had carefully examined the character of my physiognomy, and that, although he could not from the principles of Lavater have precisely indicated the subject on which I had been occupied, he should nevertheless have known that some circumstance of an uncommon and public nature had for a length of time overpowered every other consideration in my mind.

MR. BOADEN'S LETTER TO MR. G. STEEVENS.

A very early oppositionist to the validity of the fabricated manuscripts was the above Mr. Boaden, who, from being one of their most staunch supporters, suddenly shifted

his ground, and in a letter addressed to Mr. George Steevens endeavoured to controvert what was at that stage of the business generally believed,—that the manuscripts were from the pen of Shakspeare.

In pages 17 and 18 of his pamphlet, under the head "Collations and Remarks," is the following paragraph; which proves that Mr. Boaden in his research went beyond Mr. Malone, as he there allows that the fabricator had referred to the edition of Lear in 1608. As to his statement with regard to the folio of 1623, he has not, however, proved himself so acute; that edition being then in my possession, and often referred to by me.—

"The first circumstance I think it necessary to remark is, that diligent collation of the printed copies with the Lear just published, has enabled me to decide, that the writer of the manuscript at first used only the second folio edition, with such modern impressions as he might chance to possess—although, in the course of the play he acquires evidently a copy of Butter's quarto, 1608, and uses it with so determined a preference over the folio, that he preserves its readings to the absolute injury of the sense of the passages. The folio 1623 he

does not appear to have seen. The first proof which is offered occurs in the bequest of Lear to Gonerill. The words, which we find in the folio—

> 'and with champaines rich'd
> With plenteous rivers'---

are in Mr. Ireland's edition, and are not in the quarto."

Mr. Boaden's remark with respect to the word *alas*, in page 21, I must certainly allow to be correct. My long residence in France had so accustomed me to spell the word *he*las, that a considerable period elapsed ere I corrected myself of that mistake in orthography. The note in question is as follows.—

"By this curious mode of writing the interjection one might be tempted to believe that Shakspeare had received a French education at the college of St. Omers."

In page 41 Mr. Boaden quotes the words that follow in *italics* from lord Southampton's letter, and adds the annexed comment.—

" '*Thryce I have assayed to wryte, and thryce mye efforts have benne fruitlesse*' is a sentence that seems to have been written by a reader of Milton:

> 'Thrice he essay'd, and thrice, in spite of scorn,
> Tears, such as angels weep, burst forth.' "

On this comment I have only to remark, that Milton or his works never occurred to me at the moment when lord Southampton's letter was written. This is one of the many instances to be adduced of the fallacy of such criticisms, which are as remote from truth as they must prove uninteresting to the reader.

With respect to the *tout-ensemble* of Mr. Boaden's pamphlet, I have little to state, further than that its appearance stamped that gentleman's apostacy, and brought his name into public notice as an avowed enemy to the Shaksperian production.

BOADEN'S PAMPHLET ANSWERED.

Shortly after the appearance of the above gentleman's pamphlet, Mr. Wy*tt, who had frequently inspected the manuscripts, and entertained no doubts of their genuineness, published an answer to Mr. Boaden's publication, under the following title—"A comparative Review of the Opinions of Mr. James Boaden (Editor of the Oracle), &c., in 1795, and of James

Boaden, Esq. (Author of Fontainville Forest, &c.),' in 1796: By a Friend to Consistency."

In pages 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11, in order to show the former opinions of Mr. Boaden on the subject of the manuscripts, Mr. Wy*tt quotes some of the paragraphs which appeared in the Oracle; being as follow.—

" '*Shakspeare manuscripts.*---By the obliging politeness of Mr. Ireland, of Norfolk Street, the conductor of this paper * is enabled to gratify, in a general way, the public curiosity. To particularise would be fraudulent and ungrateful. Besides the Lear and Vortigern, there are various papers, the *domestica facta* of this great man's life, discovered.

" 'A letter to the lady he afterwards married, distinguished for the utmost delicacy of passion, and poetical spirit. It incloses a lock of his hair, also preserved.

" 'A profession of his religious faith, rationally pious, and grandly expressed.

" 'Some poetical compliments and poetical exercises of fancy, amongst the company at whose head he is numbered. Devises of land; receipts for money advanced, &c.; and a discovery relative to lord Southamp-

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" * For attributing to Mr. Boaden the paragraphs which appeared in the Oracle relative to the Shakspeare MSS. I have one simple reason, viz., that he was the only person concerned in the direction of that paper that ever viewed them."

ton, which we forbear to anticipate, reflecting immortal honour upon the bounty of the one, and the modesty of the other. It is the intention of Mr. Ireland to publish the first volume, with fac-similes, if possible, by the king's birth-day; the second volume probably within the following year: and now, to this new information, we have only to add, that the conviction produced upon our mind, is such as to make all scepticism ridiculous, and when we follow the sentiments of Dr. Joseph Wharton, we have no fear of our critical orthodoxy.'

"The same paper of the 21st contained further observations to this effect: 'When we were favoured with a sight of these invaluable remains, we promised the possessor that no sneering animadversions, written by those who had never seen them, should pass without reply, and probably reproof. One gentleman makes himself merry with a profession of faith from Shakspeare; he shall be reduced at once to the plea of *ignoramus*,—there happens to be indisputable proof that this was the custom of the age, nay, that other members of the same family had done so.

" 'But an objection has been urged triumphantly by those who have not seen, that a gentleman who had been accustomed to the hand-writing of that period, was yet unable to read them.

" 'The writer of this article is ready to prove his acquaintance with the hand-writing of Elizabeth's reign, in the first instance, and to read once more the MSS. in the second.—As to the silly stuff about the poet's courtship and the lock of hair, with recollection of similar feelings and similar gifts—

"We cannot but remember such things were,
And were most precious to us-----"

" 'The man who cannot, should never trust himself with the subject of Shakspeare's life, should never by a touch "pollute the page of inspiration." '

"On the 26th of February, Mr. Boaden called a second time on Mr. Ireland, again expressed his conviction of the authenticity of the MSS. and took so deep an interest in their success, as to send, on the following day, a letter (of which I among others have been favoured with a sight) which is only remarkable for the officious zeal with which he endeavours to make himself a party in the ultimate success of the MSS.---an extract will be sufficient to satisfy the reader---

" 'My dear sir,

" 'Though I spoke from memory when I said that Hunsdon was lord-chamberlain of Elizabeth's household, it was correctly stated---Henry Carey, whom she created a baron in the first year of her reign, had the charge of her person at court---and to secure us as to the required date, he was with her at the Tilbury camp, in the year 1588, and had there the care of her person.---I think this ample satisfaction upon the subject, and lose no time in sending it. This, or any deeper inquiry, will be but a poor return for the favour of your unreserved communication.'

"On the 28th appeared the following:

" '*The manuscripts of Shakspeare*.---The public look up to us for a faithful account of these important papers ---what we have opportunity to examine, we shall, from time to time, report with the most scrupulous fidelity. We have read a considerable portion of the MS. Lear. In the title-page, the great bard professes to have taken the story from Holingshed, and has, in the true spirit of

modesty, apologised for the liberty he took in departing from the exact statements of the Chronicle.---There is a letter from queen Elizabeth to Shakspeare, when the poet was manager of the Globe, commanding him with his best players to perform before her, and thanking him for some verses which her majesty much admired.---We think it will be clearly proved that all the degrading nonsense, of his holding horses, &c., will be found utterly fictitious, and that this great man was the Garrick of his age, caressed for his powers by every one great and illustrious, the gentle friend of genius, and most excellent in the quality he professed.'

"On the 23d of April, this paragraph appeared---

"'The Shaksperiana, which have been so luckily discovered, are now considered as genuine by all but those who illiberally refuse to be convinced by inspection.'"

In pages 44 and 45, in order to expose the wonderful change so speedily effected in Mr. Boaden's opinions, Mr. Wy*tt contrasts his sentiments on the papers of the two different periods named in the title.

"*Letter to Anna Hatherwaye.*

"Oracle.	"James Boaden, esq.
"This letter is 'distinguished for the utmost delicacy of passion and poetical spirit.'	"'This letter must, if genuine, have been written at sixteen years of age. The expressions have nothing of the character of

our prose in that period of our literature. The verses (that follow in Mr. Ireland's publication) are worthy of no other notice than that they are metrically smooth.' Page 40 of a Letter to G. Steevens, esq.

"*Letter to Lord Southampton.*

"Oracle.

"'A discovery relative to lord Southampton, reflecting immortal honour on the bounty of the one and the modesty of the other. The conviction produced upon our mind is such as to make all scepticism ridiculous.'

"James Boaden, esq.

"'The judicious critic at once perceives the modern colouring of diction and flow of language.' Page 42."

"*The Profession of Faith.*

"Oracle.

"'A profession of his religious faith, rationally pious and grandly expressed.'

"James Boaden, esq.

"'Nothing but the puerile quaintness and idiomatic poverty of a methodist rhapsody! Exquisite nonsense! Execrable jargon!' Pp. 42, 43, 44."

Of Mr. Wy*tt's pamphlet I shall only further add, that it was at the time deemed

MAHARAJA SERFOJI'S S...

a very spirited defence, and proved highly gratifying to every advocate for the validity of the Shaksperian manuscripts.

MR. W*BB'S PAMPHLET.

One of the most strenuous and able advocates of the Shaksperian production, was Mr. W*bb, who, under the assumed appellation of "Philalethes," gave a pamphlet to the world with the title "Shakspeare's Manuscripts, in the Possession of Mr. Ireland, examined, respecting the internal and external Evidences of their Authenticity," &c.

Speaking of the books with Shaksperian notes, Mr. W*bb, in pages 20 and 21, gives the ensuing paragraph.—

"He is thus surrounded with a host of witnesses: for not only every book, but almost every page of some of them, declare to whom they belonged. I therefore think I see this immortal poet rise again to life, holding these sacred relics in one hand, and hear him say, *These were mine*: at the same time pointing with the other to these important volumes, once his own, informing us, that these were his delightful companions in his leisure hours of retirement and study: by conversing with

whom he derived pleasure, profit, and delight: who letting fall their sparks upon his enkindling mind, lighted up that *muse of fire,* by which inspired,

> 'This Poet's eye in a fine phrensy rolling,
> Did glance from heav'n to earth, from earth to heav'n.'"

In pages 23, 24, and 25, Mr. W*bb is pleased to say that transcendent beauties of metaphor and expression frequently occur in the manuscripts, and lavishes encomiums on the style prevailing throughout. The numerous productions, he says,

"—— are all brought into unity by the exalted genius and boundless imagination of him to whom they relate. They grow out of, belong to, are his appropriates: he gathers all to himself. They are sacred FASCES bound together in indissoluble union by the authoritative hand of Shakspeare himself; to which we must all, sooner or later, yield ready assent, or reluctant obedience."

"In some cases, it is true, an author, as well as other men, might be imitated, both in his manner and style, as well as in the signature of his name. But that is not the case in the present instance. All great and eminent geniuses have their characteristic peculiarities, which not only *distinguish them* from all *others,* but *make them what they are.* These none can rival, none successfully imitate. Of all men and poets, Shakspeare had the most of these. He was a particular being, he stood alone.

To imitate him, so as to pass the deceit on the world, appears to me next to an impossibility. Who could soar with his sublime genius? Who rove with his boundless imagination? Who could rival his pregnant wit? Who with intuitive inspection discover the workings of the human mind, and by the natural evolutions of the passions interest us so deeply, as this matchless poet? Now these papers in question bear on them the same strong marks of his original genius, as those with which his acknowledged writings are deeply impressed. Is it then an unfair inquiry to ask, if these are not Shakspeare's, to whom do they belong? To whom else are they to be ascribed? Was ever another cast in his mould? Or can any other be paralleled with him?"

"For my own part, I must confess, that, if such evidences of character had appeared unsupported by any other, I should have pronounced upon them at once; and have said, that as there never was but *one* man who could have produced such works, that he, and *he only*, has produced them. The peculiarity, nature, and force of this proof, and its fair application to the case in question, is of such weight with me, that I am free to declare, that had not Shakspeare's name appeared upon these papers, I should not have hesitated to have ascribed them to him.

"But these papers bear not only the signature of his hand, but also the stamp of his soul, and the traits of his genius. His *mind* is as manifest as his *hand*. The touches of the same great master every-where appear, and appear to advantage, as they have not been corrected or chastised by a bold or unskilful hand. Here they are with all their excellencies and all their imper-

fections on their head: and by, as well as with, these, they are to be judged."

In support of the authenticity of the papers, Mr. W*bb, in page 33, states the following fact:—

"I beg leave to mention one particular instance, among many others, of a learned dignified divine, whom, with two others, I introduced myself to peruse these papers; who signified his approbation and conviction in the following strong expressions: 'Dr. Farmer has proved, as nearly to mathematical demonstration as the nature of the thing will allow, that Shakspeare was not possessed of classical learning. The papers we have inspected this day come as near to the same sort of proof, respecting their authenticity, as the nature of such evidence can admit.' In which declaration he was supported by the ready assent of two other reverend and learned gentlemen, by whom we were accompanied."

I trust I shall not be accused of inordinate fondness of self-praise for making the above extracts. So much has been said and written in reprobation of the style of my productions by *soi-disant* critics, that I hold it but an act of self-justice to give the world the opposite sentiments of at least one man of wit, learning, and sense, who wrote uninfluenced by any other consi-

deration than regard for truth—though I am as free to confess as my contemners, that his enthusiastic regard for every thing relating to our immortal Shakspeare (which for once overcame his better judgement) has led him to pour forth praises as much above my humble deserts as his own worth is superior to any thing I could say in grateful commendation of it.

MR. WALDRON.

This *gentleman of the sock*, having put on the consideration-cap of my lord Burleigh in the Critic, threw down his gauntlet, and boldly entered the lists with his brother commentators against the genuineness of my manuscripts. The pamphlet which this gentleman issued was entitled "Free Reflections on miscellaneous Papers and legal Instruments, under the Hand and Seal of William Shakspeare, in the Possession of Samuel Ireland, of Norfolk Street,"&c. This publication was made the vehicle of a play called "The Virgin Queen," intended as a continuation

of Shakspeare's Tempest, from the *phrensied brain* of Mr. Waldron.

As this gentleman's production, however, is for argument unworthy of a name when compared with the colossal Inquiry of Mr. Malone, I shall leave Mr. Waldron and his Virgin Queen for his more redoubted friend,

"The hect'ring kill-cow Hercules."

MR. MALONE'S INQUIRY.

Having, in the progress of the foregoing pages, very frequently adverted to the above elaborate work, produced for the purpose of overturning the whole Shaksperian fabric, I shall in the present instance content myself with a very few words upon the subject; as the able criticisms of Mr. George Chalmers have so fully substantiated the futility of Mr. Malone's judgement upon every topic, his flimsy pretensions as an antiquary, and his absolute want of acquaintance with the language of the very period of Shakspeare,

on which he has pretended to comment with so much ostentation.

From the perusal of Mr. Malone's Inquiry, it must appear evident to the meanest capacity that the commentator never dreamed of an opponent, although he ventured to peep into the court of Apollo during his drowsy fit: for after his conclusions are drawn upon each topic of discussion, his pages are so conceitedly interlarded with "Let us no longer hear of this"—"I trust we shall hear no more of that," and an hundred *et-ceteræ* of the same nature, that it should appear as if Mr. Malone's fiat were irrevocable; whereas, from the perusal of Mr. Chalmers's Apology and Supplement, the facts in them exhibited and the just conclusions drawn, it is obvious that Malone was not only dreaming of Parnassus, but absolutely in a doze from the beginning to the termination of his boasted Inquiry. O could the mighty Shakspeare look down from above upon this commentator, then might

the bard have recourse to his own words, and exclaim

———— "Oh but man, proud man,
Drest in a little brief authority,
Most ignorant of what he's most assur'd,
———— like an angry ape,
Plays such fantastic tricks before high Heav'n
As make the angels weep."

Or rather, as Mr. Malone has kindly undertaken, in his celebrated dream at the termination of his Inquiry, to destroy (in company with Messrs. Farmer, Steevens, and Tyrwhitt) every vestige of the Shaksperian fabrication, I shall, by the laws of retaliation, pass sentence upon the commentaries and Inquiry of this renowned critic; having recourse to his own pretty *jeu d'esprit* on the occasion.

A PROSAIC DREAM POETISED.

Employ'd on Shakspeare's theme divine,
The page all notes, save one poor line *,

* Numerous instances of this kind are to be found in the last edition of Mr. Malone's Shakspeare, where the unfortunate reader, in perusing one noble speech of our Shakspeare, is under the painful necessity of turning over a dozen pages, on account of the inexplicable

Comments with erudition deep
I conn'd, and so fell fast asleep;
When, lo! after such drowsy reading,
Methought I turn'd my mind to pleading
Our Shakspeare's cause, and tried the votes
O' the Muses nine 'gainst Irish notes.

Now Sol being there (Parnassus' master,
Great songster, and a poetaster),
With his attendant dames to boot,
Exclaim'd, "I here arrest the suit,
"Until this new opinion heard is;
"For rashly judging most absurd is."
Around m' inquiring eye was turn'd;
When, lo! our Shakspeare I discern'd;
Though not, I'll tell thee, friend, because
A picture once of duke Chandos *
His semblance bore: 'twas, you must know,
He's like t' his print i' the old folio;
Than which no duke of high degree,
Or Irish critic having three,

---

trash foisted in by commentators to perplex the sense of the poet and *swell out a new edition.*

* I have on a former occasion alluded to the subject of this and the ensuing four lines; but as the exposition of such a conceited farrago of nonsense cannot be prejudicial, and may perhaps tend to physic the commentator's egotism, I have here thought fit to give him a second hint, in order that when the *cacoëthes scribendi* again seizes him he may pay less homage to himself and be more attentive to the dictates of common sense.

Can boast a semblance half so true.——
Now to't again, and let's pursue
The vision.---Though I found at bowls*
No Spenser, Suckling, or such souls;
No Hales; or, on a barrel's back,
Old surly Jonson, sad for sack:
No; all I saw was Ritson ready,
And Chalmers " *cap-a-pee*" and steady.
With whose opinions mine proceeding,
Apollo straight the counsel heeding,
Exclaim'd, " My judgement in this case is,---
" An Irish comment such disgrace is,
" That, to appease the wrath o' the nation,
" There should be made one conflagration
" Of each grand copy, so misleading
" The reader from his author's reading:
" That Chalmers should each dear edition
" Consign, with Ritson, to perdition
" In blazing flame: that then full scope
" To Butler, Dryden, Swift, and Pope,

* It is infinitely to be wondered at, that an individual like Mr. Malone, who must have so frequently perused the divine effusions of our bard, should have reaped no more advantage from his flights of fancy than to make a set of poets occupied on Parnassus at *a game of bowls*. We shall not be surprised if, on some future occasion, the same commentator, in a somniferous mood, should introduce Homer, Hesiod, Pindar, &c., engaged in a game at *ring-taw* or facetiously amusing themselves at *blindman's buff!*

"Be instant giv'n, in song or satire,
"Or epigram, that may bespatter
"This Irish critic, form'd of vapour:
"Which being done, each morning paper
"Should publish same; that so, his life long,
"His fame be blazon'd in some droll song;
"Whence ev'ry man of taste will straight know
"His name, as birds a tatter'd scarecrow."

This sentence, mild and just throughout,
Was hail'd with loud poetic shout
Of bards Parnassian; which awoke me,
And from old Morpheus' bondage broke me.
So farewell all! may Sol befriend us,
And from all Irish notes defend us!

THE PARNASSIAN VISIT.

The following verses are addressed to Mr. J. T. M*tth**s, who entered the lists against the manuscripts, and particularly levelled his wretched attempt at satire against G. Ch*lm*rs, esq.; who, at the end of his Supplemental Apology for the Believers, has addressed a postscript to Mr. M*tth**s, proving him deficient in every requisite that should constitute the poet. In the Pursuits of Literature the filthy

venom of the author is indiscriminately poured forth; and it should seem, indeed, that

" Existence is for him bereft of charms,
When he longer sets the world at arms:
Hated, as hating, and at endless strife.
Such are the joys that bind him to this life."

It must be confessed, that the "*leaden mace*" of Mr. Ch*lm*rs has broken the spear of malignity and ignorance, by proving,

——————————" with little pains,
That heads, when open'd, may be void of brains."

LINES TO MR. J. T. M*TTH**S.

Poor *Matty*'s lame nag
Had a horrible fag,
When his master upon him did ride-a:
Such a jockey before
Ne'er appear'd, I'll be swore,
To amble near Helicon's side-a.

Sure no verse-making wight,
With an ink-horn bedight,
And quill, ever made such bravado:
You'd have sworn, by his look,
That the grave was forsook
By Don Quixotte, to fight an armada.

All the Muses ran straight
To behold his strange gait:
They ran to examine the knight-a:
But mark, great and small,
What mischance did befal,
When they question'd him as to his right-a.

With one voice cried the Nine,
" What production divine
" Should warrant this trot to our mountain?
" Let us know what's thy *forte*:
" Pr'ythee show thy passport,
" To ensure thee a draught from this fountain."

To these words Matty said
" Sure, *mesdames*, ye have read
" Of my works, for of that I can't doubt-a:
" I made poor authors stare;
" For such rancour was there
" That my venom has made a fine rout-a.

" My dark soul, I am sure,
" Would far easier endure
" A dip in Melpomene's chalice,
" Than a poem quite new
" Should have met public view
" And not have been damn'd by my malice.

" In malignity's guise
" Have I dazzled men's eyes:
" With Greek all the town has been treated:
" So, puff'd up with my pride,
" I determin'd to ride,
" And soon was on Pegasus seated.

" But the steed in a crack
" Threw me plump from his back:
" In vain I loud ranted and swore-a:
" When, in cursed despight,
" Ch*lm*rs drubb'd me outright,
" And prov'd I'd no poetic lore-a.

" From my fears somewhat freed,
" I've look'd round for my steed,
" But no Pegasus find on the grass-a;
" But behold in his stead,
" With lank ears on its head,
" My palfrey this loud braying ass-a.

" So unfold, I entreat,
" The true cause of this cheat."---
Cried the Nine, " You shall instantly know it:
" When dry Learning's the Muse,
" You should think it no news
" That a jack-ass should carry the poet."

LINES TO MR. J. T. M*TTH**S PROVED CONSONANT WITH JUSTICE.

That the reader may not conceive me over-splenetic in the foregoing lines, I beg leave to refer him to Mr. Chalmers's Supplemental Apology, wherein he has proved, by incontestible evidence, the up-start pretensions of the author of the Pur-suits of Literature; who for a short period

dazzled the public with Greek quotations which were not comprehensible to the generality of the world, and thus became a species of dictator in literature. To direct my readers to the proofs adduced by Mr. Chalmers (which, by the way, should be graven in golden characters, and reared on high to undeceive the misguided public), I here acquaint them, that at page 495 of the Supplemental Apology for the Believers commences a postscript addressed to "T. J. M*tth**s, F. R. S., S. S. A., the author of the Pursuits of Literature;" wherein Mr. Chalmers attacks and confounds him under the following heads:

"1. Proofs of your being the author of the Pursuits of Literature.
"2. Proofs of your impertinence.
"3. Proofs of your malignity.
"4. Proofs of your jacobinism.
"5. Proofs of your ignorance.
"6. Proofs of your nonsense.
"7. Proofs of your inability to write poetry.
"8. Proofs that you cannot write *at all*."

After the establishment of the forego-

ing positions by Mr. Chalmers, which are proved from the subject-matter of the very popular work entitled Pursuits of Literature, what has its author to state? nay, what has he to do,

> " But, like the wounded viper, wreathe in death,
> And 'mid Cimmerian darkness yield his breath ? "

LETTER TO GEORGE CHALMERS, ESQ., F. R. S., S. S. A.

Sir,

As some years have transpired since I had the honour of seeing and conversing with you at Mr. S. Ireland's house in Norfolk Street, at a time when my since-proved unfortunate production of the Shaksperian papers excited universal regard and gained me general attention, it is more than probable that I may have fallen totally from your recollection. But you, sir, have not sunk from mine. The profundity of your learning, the acuteness of your judgement, and the affability of your manners, can never be forgotten by me. Pardon, therefore, my obtruding myself thus publicly on your notice. There are few whose good opinion I am now highly solicitous to obtain; for long subjection to the unjustly severe censure of the world has rendered me to a great degree careless of its smiles. Yet, sir, there are a few whose favourable regard would still be pleasing to me: I would still

feel gratification on the assurance of being restored to the place I formerly held in the estimation of those whom I unintentionally offended,—the gentlemen who yielded credence to the genuineness of the Shaksperian papers. Allow me, therefore, to make to you, sir, whom I hold the chief of these, the only amend I now can,—the expression of my hearty contrition, and the solemn assurance (for the truth of which I refer to the numerous proofs adduced in the present work) that I was not impelled to the commission of that which has caused me so much sorrow by any mean or criminal motive. It was at first to me the innocent exercise of a leisure hour in boyhood, to please an indulgent parent and gratify a blameless vanity. The after dissemination, contrary to my desire, of those things which I had given in confidence, alone transformed the act from innocence to criminality. But I will cease to tire your patience by repeating what is scattered everywhere throughout the book at present before you.

Before I take my leave, however, permit me to remind you of the wise old saying, that "out of evil frequently ariseth good," and to adduce one proof more of its truth. Had my fabrication never existed, Mr. Malone would never have obtruded himself on the public as the publisher of an Inquiry, and thus for once done good, by arousing you, sir, to evince the result of your superior sagacity and research, to the utter confusion indeed of Mr. Malone both as a critic and an anti-

quary, but to the enlightening of the world, whom you have instructed in Shaksperian criticism, and taught when to receive and when reject the proffered emendations of the many commentators on our immortal dramatist. The speciously-learned author of the Pursuits of Literature, too, but for the same cause would probably not have emitted his rancorous venom at you, sir; and thus he, likewise, might have escaped exposure. Your complete overthrow of this pedantic gentleman is a benefit for which the literary world owes you many thanks: it will be placed next in rank to the confutation of the commentating Mr. Malone. The ill-raised fame of the Pursuits of Literature you have shaken to its sandy foundation: of the remembrance of that patch-work fabric

" not a rack is left behind."

To have been in any way the means of such good, almost compensates me for the injuries I have suffered, and should atone for many of my errors. Accept, I beg of you, sir, my hearty thanks for the pleasure, the knowledge, and improvement I have received from *your* works; and, if you can, forget, or tenderly judge, *mine*. In the ardent hope that I may yet not be deemed altogether unworthy your regard, I take the liberty of subscribing myself

Your most obedient

And very humble servant,

-----------, 1805. W. H. IRELAND.

GENERAL APOLOGY FOR THE PRODUCTION OF THE SHAKSPERIAN MANUSCRIPTS.

I have been thus particular in every statement concerning my production of the papers, in order that it may be perfectly understood I did not act upon any premeditated plan of deception, but was as it were unwittingly led into the error; and when a man has yielded to falsehood in a single act, I believe it will invariably be found that he seeks a veil from detection in a continuation of the same impropriety. Whatever has been my fault, my judges unquestionably have not been lenient, nor did they justly weigh the motive and inducement before they decided on the act. It is full time the matter were placed in a just light; it is time I should cease to endure the blighting censure of Malignity rather than the mild and convincing reproof of Truth.

If we descend to the lowest court of judicature in this country, I believe it will appear that crimes are appreciated according to circumstances; that one man

guilty of murder suffers the judgement of the law in the forfeiture of his life, while another, who has equally bereaved a fellow-being of existence, is permitted to re-enter society upon the payment of a shilling. Upon these premises I shall ground my defence; and, under the following heads, endeavour to place my offence in that point of view in which every man would wish his own conduct to be regarded.—

1st, I did not intend injury to any one.

2dly, I really injured no one.

3dly, I did not produce the papers from any pecuniary motives.

4thly, I was by no means benefited by the papers.

5thly, The gentlemen who came to inspect the papers have themselves alone to blame for the variety of productions which came forth after the fictitious deed between Shakpeare and Fraser.

6thly, Being scarcely seventeen years and a half old, my boyhood should have in some measure screened

me from the malice of my persecutors.

7thly, The reason why I have been so persecuted.

First, *I did not intend injury to any one.*

In the course of the preceeding pages (under the head of the "Deed between William Shakspeare and Michael Fraser") I have given a full statement of the fact that urged me to the production of that instrument, which was no other than a fervent desire I had to afford satisfaction to Mr. Samuel Ireland. I had then no idea of producing any other document: as a convincing proof of which, nearly three weeks elapsed ere I gave into Mr. Ireland's hand the profession of faith. Had I followed any premeditated plan, I should have taken special care to have had a sufficient quantity of the manuscripts ready for delivery; whereas every paper given was composed upon the spur of the moment.—I will grant that vanity had a share in the business; but had no fuel been heaped upon

the fire, the short-lived flame would have died away: and even so must it at any time have proved with my poor attempt to imitate the style of the most sublime genius that has ever graced this or any other country, had not the encomiums lavished on my productions constantly hurried me on in the track of literary falsehood.

How then stands the account? I began the fabrication in the belief that by an innocent delusion I could please one whom I was anxious to gratify, and the persuasion (which I believe will be allowed not unnatural to a youth) that, if the deception were even exposed, the boldness of the attempt would have gained me praise for my ingenuity rather than censure for my deceit.—May it not therefore be concluded that I was not instigated by a desire to *injure any one?*

Secondly, *I really injured no one.*

Under this head I must first state that the manuscripts were produced as the handwriting of Shakspeare. Now even if we

for a moment grant that the penmanship had deceived, yet there is still an important question to be decided:—was the language competent to deceive the public? I answer unhesitatingly that it was not: consequently credence should not have been yielded by the believers so lightly, on the mere external appearance of the papers: they should have maturely considered the internal evidence; and then, as the spurious composition must have exposed itself, they would not have been deceived, and of consequence their mental faculties would not have been imposed upon.

I will lay no stress upon the story delivered by me to Mr. Ireland, and the concealment of the supposed gentleman; I will not speak of the redundancy of letters to be found in the spelling, which has employed the erudite pens of Messrs. Malone, Waldron, Boaden, &c., &c.: but I will bring a stronger fact to bear me out; for it is stated in the Inquiry, published by Mr. Malone, that the forgery was palpable to the meanest capacity, and that the flimsy

contrivance was to be seen through at the first glance. If so, I can have done no injury to any living creature; for that which in itself was not capable of deceiving any one, cannot perhaps, strictly speaking, be deemed a forgery: neither was it any injury to the reputation of Shakspeare as a poet. Now the former believers in the manuscripts being perfectly satisfied in their own minds, until Mr. Malone chose to inform them that they knew nothing about the matter, I do aver that it is at the said Mr. Malone they should level their shafts; as I could not have injured them; having, according to Mr. Malone, committed no forgery.

Thus then I reason: Those who inspected the papers, with very few exceptions, were delighted on viewing them; consequently they received no injury. As to the individuals who did not think fit to view them, they can certainly have no cause for complaint, as their wits were not hoodwinked by the deception; which was, in fact, the only injury to be sustained.

Thirdly, *I did not produce the papers from any pecuniary motives.*

As extravagance or cupidity are the usual incentives to the acquirement of wealth, and as gold is the mighty touchstone of consciences in the present day, I shall content myself, in the first instance, with proving that I was then neither extravagant nor avaricious.—Every necessary that was requisite to existence was procured me by Mr. Ireland; and, as far as he deemed it requisite, I was encouraged in my pursuit after old books, &c.; as he would frequently state his satisfaction on witnessing my expenditure of money in those pursuits, rather than in the frequenting of company. Green in years, I experienced no incitements to dissoluteness; and the hours allotted for my attendance at chambers (being from ten till three, and from five till eight) left me, indeed, little time for any plans of pleasure; in addition to which, I was sufficiently engaged in the execution of the manuscripts.

Thus far on the score of extravagance. With regard to cupidity: if such had been my motive, why did I not exact from Mr. S. Ireland certain stipulations? why did I not, on the production of the first documents, accept the offer of some of his valuable books, for I was a lover of such property? why was I contented with the sum of ninety pounds for the Vortigern, when four hundred and three had been actually received for my sole benefit? and, lastly, why did I give every thing to Mr. Ireland, without any reservation to myself, when I constantly heard it affirmed that the papers, if published, would prove a source of incalculable benefit? On the contrary, as before stated*, I was ever averse to the publication of the manuscripts; being fully aware that such was the only step which would throw a degree of infamy on the business, as the receipt of money would stamp it a pecuniary transaction.

After these home facts, I trust it must be

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* *Vide* the account under the head "Publication of the Miscellaneous Papers."

candidly confessed on all hands, *That I did not produce the papers from any pecuniary motives.*"

Fourthly, *I was not benefited by the papers.*

In addition to the facts stated under the preceding head, respecting what appertains to pecuniary considerations, I must further allege, that, when the manuscripts were disbelieved, and that the most pointed aspersions were thrown out against Mr. Ireland's character, I had to encounter all the opprobrium which he and his friends chose to lavish upon me because I would not, because I could not, give the name of an original donor of the manuscripts. It was in vain I argued that I was bound on oath to preserve the secret inviolable, and recalled to Mr. Ireland's recollection the terms on which he willingly undertook to publish the papers: every representation proved ineffectual: his character, he affirmed, was called in question; it was in my power to extricate him, and I refused

to do so. Wearied at length with the persecutions I endured, I took the resolution of quitting Mr. S. Ireland's house; which event took place ere I had attained my twentieth year: since which period I have had to struggle against every opposition, and without the assistance of a single shilling from my family. By this step I of course violated my indenture with the solicitor to whom I was articled: and it was indeed stated to me, by the late Albany Wallis, esq., of Norfolk Street, that I should never make any progress in the law, as all persons would imagine that I might forge deeds at pleasure, and would consequently be fearful of intrusting papers to my care. Besides these circumstances, a train of events were consequent on my quitting Mr. Ireland's mansion which have ever proved to me a source of the most painful contemplation.—Let me now ask, *What is the benefit I have received from the papers?* The answer I shall leave to the breast of candour, and proceed to the following head.

Fifthly, *The gentlemen who came to inspect the papers, have themselves to blame for the variety of productions which came forth after the fictitious deed between Shakspeare and Fraser.*

In treating of a variety of the papers produced, I have, in the preceding pages, fully demonstrated that the conversation and questions of persons well stored with anecdotes of the period of Elizabeth and James frequently gave the hint of subjects for my after employment. Here, therefore, I need say little on the topic: but, as in some sort connected with it, I shall note another instance of Mr. Malone's gross misconception and disgustingly ostentatious egotism; not to prove Mr. Malone's incapacity as a general critic—this Mr. Chalmers has already done most completely—but because his error at this time is on a point to which it is impossible that any person except myself can speak with positiveness.

In Mr. Malone's elaborate Inquiry he

has named certain works which *the forger* of the papers, he states, *must* have had recourse to; and in page 117, speaking of the spelling of Shakspeare's name to the receipt for playing before lord Leicester, he *very modestly*, and with *sweet apologetic compunction*, says, " Mr. Steevens AND MYSELF have *most innocently* led the fabricator of all these novelties into a lamentable error!" &c. Now it happens, very unfortunately for Mr. Malone, that most of the books which he states to have been perused by *the forger* were unknown to me, save by name, and many not even thus. And with respect to Mr. Steevens and himself, I must beg leave to acquaint the commentator that I have in general found his notes so contemptible, and (after Mr. Chalmers's Apology for the Believers and Mr. Ritson's Inquiry into his capability as an annotator) his research to be so very dubious, that I rather perfer reading the works of our immortal bard without his farrago of idle doubts and probabilities,

than lose the author's *sense* while rambling in the annotator's wilderness of *nonsense.* Perhaps, indeed, if I had consulted the notes in question, and produced every thing coincident with the conjectures therein contained, the papers might have stood some chance of praise from the commentator: at least the forger might, for the attention he had then evidently paid to "MY *last edition of Shakspeare's works.*"

Having thus added another proof to the enormous bulk already extant of the incapacity of Mr. Malone as a commentator, I shall dismiss the subject by repeating the assertion made at the beginning of this article, that not infrequently I was incited to the production of papers by the casual information obtained from the conversation and queries of those persons inspecting the manuscripts who were conversant with the history of Shakspeare's age.

Sixthly, *Being scarcely seventeen years*

and a half old, my boyhood should have in some measure screened me from the malice of my persecutors.

In the introduction to these several heads of vindication I have asserted (what is, indeed, universally allowed) that when the atrocity or merit of a deed is to be decided upon, it is not enough to take the act itself into consideration: all its attendant circumstances (if I may be allowed so to speak) should likewise well be weighed. In the foregoing pages I have endeavoured clearly to inform the reader of the steps which progressively led me to the commission of that which has brought on me such heavy censure. I have done so for the purpose of proving that I was at no time impelled by a criminal motive: I trust I have effected this, and that from the candid mind at least the weighty part of my offence will by this statement be wiped away.

Mr. Ritson has stated, with his usual acrimony, that every literary impostor deserves hanging as much as a common fe-

lon. I do not, however, remember his specifying the age and intention of the fabricator. Had he been conversant with the process of my fabrication, he would perhaps have mitigated the punishment to transportation. However, should literary imposture be rendered cognisable to a criminal court of judicature, I fear many of our commentators would tremble for their own necks, and particularly if the law, as no doubt it would, should have regard to the offence of distorting the meaning of an author, or imposing on the world the fanciful suppositions of the commentator for the original language of the writer. With respect to Mr. Malone, he certainly was unacquainted with the person who fabricated the manuscripts on the publication of his Inquiry: he consequently was justifiable in conceiving the whole to be the production of some individuals of mature age for the express purpose of gain. His introduction, therefore, of the name of *Lauders*, who was a man of science, and no boy, as well as of that of *Psalmanazar*, was per-

fectly consistent. I cannot, however, discover any coincidence between my papers and poor *dame Theodosia Ivy*'s deed, who expressly forged an instrument in order to establish her right to property which did not belong to her. I cannot expect mercy from Mr. Malone; but I scarcely think that he would have troubled himself to make the researches contained in his Inquiry into my papers, had he known them to be the production of a boy of seventeen years of age. As I do not, however, intend to leave my case to the mercy of Mr. Malone, I candidly submit to a generous public, whether my age, and the causes leading to my fabrication of the papers, should not be taken into consideration, and whether I may not be acquitted of every thing except boyish folly.

I beg leave to state, that such was the light in which it was regarded by Albany Wallis, esq., who stated it as his decided opinion that Mr. Malone and the public ought rather to pass the business over as a

boyish frolic (such was his expression), than continually heap odium upon me as a daring and bold impostor.

Seventhly, *The reason why I have been so persecuted.*

Under this head I may perhaps give offence to some individuals whose good opinion I would fain deserve: at any rate I shall *duly appreciate* the liberality of the literary world by simply stating that the very points to be adduced in extenuation of my fault, are the very reasons which operate in their minds to vilify and upbraid me. I was a boy—consequently they were deceived by a boy; and the imposition practised on their intellectual faculties was therefore the more galling. On the contrary, had the papers been the production of a man of known science and learning, they then would have pardoned the abuse, because he would have been more on a level with themselves: and although they would have regarded him as a dangerous forger, they would have granted that he

was a *very clever* man: whereas I have not only been vilified by the lovers of Greek and Latin as a bold fabricator, but even the smallest portion of praise, as to the language of the papers, has been scrupulously withheld; and that for no other reason than because I was a boy.

TANJORE MAHARAJAH SERFOJI'S SARASWATI MAHAL

THE TANJORE SARASWATI MAHAL.

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FINIS.

TANJORE MAHARAJA SERFOGI'S SARASWATI MAHAL

Ellerton & Byworth, Printers, Johnson's Court, Fleet Street.